

Duckworth and Franken re-introduce bill to train Illinoisians for open, high-skill jobs

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Duckworth-Franken CC2C Act will help promote partnerships between businesses and community colleges to close the skills gap

WASHINGTON — Today, U.S. Senators Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) and AL Franken (D-MN) announced the reintroduction of their legislation to close the “skills gap,” which makes it difficult for small businesses and other employers to find qualified candidates for unfilled jobs by supporting innovative partnerships between community colleges, technical colleges, and businesses to train students to fill high-demand jobs. The *Community College to Career Fund Act* (CC2C) builds off of successful public-private partnerships like the Zurich Insurance Apprenticeship at Harper College in Palatine, Illinois, that train workers for jobs in high-skill industries like advanced manufacturing, health care, clean energy, and information technology.

“At the same time our small businesses are struggling to find qualified candidates to fill job openings, too many young Americans are struggling to find good-paying jobs once they graduate from school,” said Senator Duckworth. **“Community colleges across Illinois and throughout the country can help solve both of these problems if we provide the resources they need to do it. I’m proud to re-introduce the *Community College to Career Fund Act* with Senator Franken to help community colleges prepare students for good-paying jobs nearby, and I look forward to working with him to get it to the President’s desk.”**

“I’ve seen these partnerships work all over Minnesota, and I want to scale them up across the country to help boost businesses and create more American jobs,” said Sen. Franken. **“I’ve been working to fix the ‘skills gap’ for a long time, and I’m going to be fighting to make our *Community College to Career Fund Act* law to fill open jobs, cut education costs for students, and make our country more competitive.”**

The *Community College to Career Fund Act* supports a workforce model that not only fills open jobs, but also makes education costs lower for students and keeps the country more competitive in the global market. The bill creates a competitive grant program to fund more partnerships between businesses and two-year colleges. These partnerships will focus on valuable job training-related efforts, such as registered apprenticeships, on-the-job training opportunities, and paid internships for low-income students that allow them simultaneously to earn credit for work-based learning in a high-skill field.

The legislation is supported by the American Association of Community Colleges, the National Skills Coalition, the National Tooling and Machine Association, Opportunity Nation, the Precision Machined Products Association, the Precision Metal Forming Association, Third Way, the United States Student Association, and more than 20 other organizations.

You can read a summary of the bill [here](#) and view the bill [here](#).