

Duckworth and Kelly highlight legislation to close "skills gap" and prepare Illinoisans for good-paying jobs

April 20 2017 8:19 AM



CHICAGO — U.S. Senator Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) and U.S. Representative Robin Kelly (D-IL) appeared together at Olive-Harvey College in Chicago today to highlight their legislation to close the “skills gap” by better preparing students for careers in high-demand industries like manufacturing, healthcare, clean energy and information

technology. Duckworth and Kelly recently helped introduce the [*Community College to Career Fund Act \(CC2C\)*](#), which would encourage local small businesses and manufacturers to partner with community colleges to develop workforce training programs.

“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. “Congresswoman Kelly and I helped introduce the *Community College to Career Fund Act* to encourage companies and community colleges to work together to prepare students for careers in the 21st century.”

“Right now, there are thousands of good-paying jobs available in the Chicagoland area, but many remain vacant because of a lack of appropriately skilled workers. By linking our local community colleges and businesses, we can build a pipeline career-ready students armed with the right skills to succeed,” said Congresswoman Robin Kelly.

“The *Community College to Career Act* ensures the businesses and community colleges are working hand-in-hand to arm students with the right skills for good-paying jobs and life-long careers.”

The CC2C Fund Act would create a competitive grant program that encourages public-private partnerships to develop curriculum, support internships and create job-training programs to give students skills to succeed in fields like healthcare, advanced manufacturing, clean energy and information technology. It is modeled after the successful College to Career program that Olive-Harvey and the City Colleges of Chicago have implemented in concert with industry leaders and Harper College’s partnership with Northrop Grumman that helps train students for openings at Northrop’s high-tech manufacturing facility in Rolling Meadows.

The legislation has been endorsed 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.