



Bipartisan Duckworth Bill to Help National Labs Find Qualified Employees Passes Senate Committee

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WASHINGTON, DC – Bipartisan legislation introduced by U.S. Senators Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) and Mike Crapo (R-ID) passed the Senate Energy and Natural Resources (ENR) Committee unanimously today and will now be considered by the full Senate. With many employees of our National Laboratories and the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) retiring age, the *DOE National Labs Jobs ACCESS Act (Apprenticeships for Complete and Committed Employment for Specialized Skills)* would establish apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeship programs between the national laboratories and NNSA and universities, community colleges, local high schools and intermediaries. Congressman Ben Ray Lujan (D-NM-03) sponsors companion legislation in the U.S. House of Representatives.

“The skilled technicians working at our National Laboratories provide immense value and help make all of the Laboratories’ groundbreaking scientific discoveries possible,” Senator Duckworth said. “I commend the committee for passing our bipartisan legislation and look forward to working with Senator Crapo to achieve Senate passage of our bill that would prepare the next generation of students to work at our National Laboratories and help ensure America remains at the forefront of technological innovation for generations to come.”

“The need for a qualified, educated workforce of skilled technicians in the field of nuclear energy continues to climb,” said Senator Crapo. “The passage of the DOE National Labs Jobs ACCESS Act out of Committee is a positive step toward helping fill these high-demand positions at the Idaho National Laboratory and other national labs. I look forward to continuing to work with Senator Duckworth to get this legislation across the finish line.”

The bipartisan and bicameral *DOE National Labs Jobs ACCESS Act* would create a grant program to be run by the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), in consultation with the Department of Labor, to facilitate the creation of these apprenticeship programs. Technicians would be trained in one-of-a-kind facilities, hazardous materials, special machinery and tools that are inaccessible from commercial industry experts. The bill is supported by the Union of Concerned Scientists.

Duckworth has long supported investing in cutting-edge research programs to address the skills gap and prepare Americans to work in high-demand industries. In March, Duckworth re-introduced the [Energy Jobs for our Heroes Act](#), which was also [passed](#) by the ENR committee today, to help Veterans gain the training and credentials necessary to secure job opportunities in the energy sector. The legislation connects highly qualified and skilled Veterans with employers in fast-growing solar, wind, nuclear and clean energy industries. Last month, she also re-introduced the [Community College to Career Fund in Higher Education Act \(CC2C\)](#) to make education more affordable for students pursuing degrees in high-skill industries by supporting innovative partnerships between technical colleges, community colleges and businesses that train students for careers in high-demand fields like advanced manufacturing, health care, clean energy and information technology.