

Senators Reintroduce Legislation To Train Students For High Skilled Jobs

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Senators Tammy Duckworth (D-IL), Dick Durbin (D-IL), Dianne Feinstein (D-CA), Chris Van Hollen (D-MD), Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH), and Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) reintroduced legislation today to make education more affordable for students pursuing degrees in high-skill industries.

The bill would help businesses fill vacant, good-paying positions with qualified candidates. The *Community College to Career Fund in Higher Education Act (CC2C)*, which Duckworth has previously [introduced](#), would support innovative partnerships

between technical colleges, community colleges, and businesses that train students for careers in high-demand fields.

This legislation builds off of successful public-private partnerships like the Zurich Insurance Apprenticeship at Harper College in Palatine, Illinois, that trains workers for jobs in high-skill industries like advanced manufacturing, healthcare, clean energy, and information technology. The apprenticeship program supports the future of the American workforce by expanding access for students who historically have not had this access.

“Long before the COVID-19 pandemic, far too many of our nation’s best and brightest have struggled to find good-paying jobs while many businesses search for qualified candidates to fill their vacant positions,” Duckworth said. “Investing in our community colleges in Illinois and around the country can help bridge this divide, prepare more hard-working Americans for 21st-century jobs and lift up our students as we work to recover and rebuild from this public health and economic crisis. I’m proud to re-introduce this legislation to help increase access to high-quality, affordable education programs.”

“Community colleges offer students the education and training they need at an affordable price. Investing in community colleges will prepare young Americans for the jobs of the future, without taking on tremendous student loan debt, and help them build successful lives. An investment in America’s workforce is an investment in our economy, and I’m proud to join Senator Duckworth and my colleagues to introduce this bill today,” Durbin said.

“As I visit manufacturing and engineering businesses across Maryland, I often hear about the need for more skilled workers to fill open jobs. In order to boost our economy and grow our workforce, we’ve got to invest in apprenticeship and training programs in high-demand fields for students and job-seekers. This common-sense proposal will help provide more individuals with the experience they need to successfully obtain highly skilled jobs. I’ll keep working to strengthen our workforce and build better pipelines between training programs and employers in order to provide good career paths for Marylanders,” said Van Hollen.

“New Hampshire is facing a serious shortage of skilled workers in critical fields like health care and manufacturing at the same time as many Granite Staters are struggling to find good-paying jobs. Apprenticeship and job training programs that close the skills gap and expand our workforce are key to alleviating these workforce issues, which is exactly what this bill would help do,” said Shaheen. “This commonsense legislation would invest in our community colleges and empower students with necessary skill sets to compete globally in the 21st-century economy, helping our businesses and economy

thrive – a win-win. I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support this important legislation.”

“Investing in skills training is good for workers and good for our economy,” said Klobuchar. “As labor shortages continue across the nation, it’s critical that we ensure students receive the education they need to fill these openings in the workforce. With this legislation, we are doing just that.”

The *Community College to Career Fund in Higher Education Act (CC2C)* will help reduce education costs for students, fill jobs and increase America’s competitiveness in the global economy. The bill will create a competitive grant program to support more partnerships between two-year colleges and businesses. 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 endorsed by the National Skills Coalition, American Association of Community Colleges (AACC), Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT), Harper College, the Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP), and the National Job Corps Association.

Duckworth has been a long-time advocate of increasing resources for higher education institutions, making college more affordable for students, and closing the skills gap. Earlier this year, Duckworth helped [reintroduce](#) bipartisan legislation, the *Cultivating Opportunity, and Recovery to the Pandemic through Service (CORPS) Act*, which builds on her [21st Century American Service Act](#) and would expand national service programs significantly to help the country recover and rebuild from COVID-19.