

NAPE PUBLIC POLICY PLATFORMS



S. 839: Jumpstart Our Businesses by Supporting Students (JOBS) Act of 2019

Summary

Introduced in the Senate on March 14, 2019, by Senate CTE Caucus Co-Chairs, *Senators Tim Kaine (D-VA) and Rob Portman (R-OH)*, with original co-sponsors, *Senators Tammy Baldwin (D-WI), Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), Shelley Capito (R-WV), Margaret Hassan (D-NH), Debbie Stabenow (D-MI), Cory Gardner (R-CO), Sherrod Brown (D-OH), Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), and Benjamin Cardin (D-MD)*, the Jumpstart Our Businesses By Supporting Students (JOBS) Act, is a bipartisan bill that would help students access training for the 7.3 million vacant jobs that are unfilled in part because of a shortage of qualified workers.

The JOBS Act would close this “skills-gap” by expanding Pell Grant eligibility to cover high-quality and rigorous short-term job training programs so that workers can afford the skills training and credentials that are in high demand in today’s job market. Under current law, Pell Grants (i.e., needs-based grants for low-income and working students) can only be applied toward programs that are more than 600 clock hours or at least 15 weeks in length; even though many job training programs are shorter term. The bill would expand Pell grant eligibility to students enrolled in quality short-term education and training programs offered by public institutions of higher education that:

- Are at least 150 clock hours over 8 weeks of instruction;
- Provide training aligned with the needs of employers in a state or local area;
- Are offered by an eligible training provider as defined by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA);
- Award program completers with an industry-valued credential;
- Satisfy any applicable prerequisites for professional licensure or certification;
- Have been evaluated by an accrediting agency for quality and student outcomes; and
- Connect to a career pathway when applicable

Why This is Important to NAPE

While the number of students pursuing postsecondary certifications is growing, the supply of skilled workers still falls short of industry demand. The JOBS Act encourages employers to work with institutions of higher

education to identify in-demand career fields. The legislation would expand Pell Grant eligibility under the Higher Education Act to students enrolled in short-term skills and job training programs that lead to industry-based credentials and high-skills, in-demand employment.

Current Status

Introduced in the Senate on March 14, 2019, the legislation was read twice and referred to the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.