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(Original Signature of Member)

112TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. _____

To amend the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 to provide for the establishment of the Small Business Liaison Pilot Program.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Ms. BONAMICI introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on _____

A BILL

To amend the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 to provide for the establishment of the Small Business Liaison Pilot Program.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Workforce Infrastruc-
5 ture for Skilled Employees Investment Act” or the “WISE
6 Investment Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. SMALL BUSINESS LIAISON PILOT PROGRAM.**

2 Section 171 of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998
3 (29 U.S.C. 2916) is amended by adding at the end the
4 following:

5 “(f) SMALL BUSINESS LIAISON PILOT PROGRAM.—

6 “(1) ESTABLISHMENT OF SMALL BUSINESS LI-
7 AISON PILOT PROGRAM.—The Secretary may award
8 competitive grants to local boards, community col-
9 leges, and postsecondary vocational institutions in
10 States and outlying areas to promote local economic
11 growth and eliminate gaps between the workforce
12 skills available and the workforce skills needed in
13 local areas or regions.

14 “(2) APPLICATION.—To receive a grant under
15 this subsection a local board, community college, or
16 postsecondary vocational institution in a State or
17 outlying area shall submit to the Secretary an appli-
18 cation in such manner, at such time, and containing
19 such information as the Secretary may require.

20 “(3) SPECIFICATIONS OF GRANTS.—

21 “(A) TIME PERIOD.—A grant shall be used
22 over a 36-month period.

23 “(B) AMOUNT OF GRANT.—In determining
24 the amount of a grant made under this sub-
25 section, the Secretary may consider—

1 “(i) the ability of the grant applicant
2 to conduct outreach activities;

3 “(ii) the ability of the grant applicant
4 to conduct skills gap assessments;

5 “(iii) the extent to which the grant
6 applicant works with or, after imple-
7 menting a strategic skills gap action plan,
8 plans to work with small businesses within
9 its local area or region; and

10 “(iv) any other factor that the Sec-
11 retary deems appropriate.

12 “(C) LIMITATIONS.—

13 “(i) A recipient may not receive more
14 than one grant under this subsection.

15 “(ii) No grant under this subsection
16 may be for an amount more than
17 \$500,000.

18 “(iii) The Secretary shall, in deter-
19 mining whether to award a grant, consider
20 the geographic diversity of grant recipi-
21 ents.

22 “(D) USE OF FUNDS.—

23 “(i) IN GENERAL.—A local board,
24 community college, or postsecondary voca-
25 tional institution that receives a grant

1 under this subsection shall use the grant
2 funds to pay for a new or current employee
3 to serve as liaison to conduct activities de-
4 scribed in clause (ii).

5 “(ii) SMALL & LOCAL BUSINESS LIAI-
6 SON.—The liaison—

7 “(I) shall—

8 “(aa) prepare a strategic ac-
9 tion skills gap assessment;

10 “(bb) develop a strategic
11 skills gap action plan; and

12 “(cc) conduct any other ac-
13 tivity that the Secretary deems
14 appropriate for the purposes of
15 this subsection; and

16 “(II) may—

17 “(aa) engage in outreach in
18 the local area or region;

19 “(bb) conduct business site
20 visits, interviews, and assess-
21 ments;

22 “(cc) consult in the imple-
23 mentation of the skills action
24 plan;

1 “(dd) complete more than 1
2 skills gap action plan; and

3 “(ee) consult with the local
4 offices of the Small Business Ad-
5 ministration.

6 “(iii) PROHIBITION.—A grant received
7 under this subsection may not be used to
8 supplant existing funding or efforts.

9 “(E) CONFIDENTIALITY OF INFORMA-
10 TION.—The grant recipient may not disclose
11 the name, address, or contact information of a
12 business, employer, or other person that pro-
13 vided information to the grant recipient to com-
14 pile information in the strategic skills gap as-
15 sessment or strategic skills gap action plan
16 without consent of such business, employer, or
17 other person.

18 “(4) REPORTING.—Each year, the Secretary
19 shall report to the Congress—

20 “(A) the number of grants awarded under
21 this subsection;

22 “(B) the recipients of grants awarded
23 under this subsection;

24 “(C) the activities carried out by each re-
25 cipient under paragraph (3)(D); and

1 “(D) an assessment describing—

2 “(i) the success of the program to
3 promote local economic growth and elimi-
4 nate gaps between the workforce skills
5 available and the workforce skills needed in
6 local areas or regions; and

7 “(ii) any recommendations for reau-
8 thorization and expansion of the program
9 that the Secretary may have.

10 “(5) DEFINITIONS.—In this subsection:

11 “(A) COMMUNITY COLLEGE.—The term
12 ‘community college’ has the meaning given the
13 term in section 312(f) of the Higher Education
14 Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1058(f)).

15 “(B) LOCAL AREA.—The term ‘local area’
16 means the labor market immediately sur-
17 rounding or affected by a local board, commu-
18 nity college, or postsecondary vocational institu-
19 tion.

20 “(C) POSTSECONDARY VOCATIONAL INSTI-
21 TUTION.—The term ‘postsecondary vocational
22 institution’ has the meaning given the term in
23 section 102(c) of the Higher Education Act of
24 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1002(c)).

1 “(D) REGION.—The term ‘region’ means 2
2 or more local areas that comprise a common
3 labor market for an industry sector of related
4 occupations.

5 “(E) STRATEGIC SKILLS GAP ASSESS-
6 MENT.—The term ‘strategic skills gap assess-
7 ment’ means an assessment that—

8 “(i) identifies areas of current and ex-
9 pected demand for labor and skills in a
10 specific industry sector of related occupa-
11 tions that is—

12 “(I) producing jobs in the local
13 area or region involved;

14 “(II) developing emerging jobs in
15 the local area or region involved; or

16 “(III) suffering chronic worker
17 shortages;

18 “(ii) identifies the current and ex-
19 pected supply of labor and skills in that
20 sector or group in the local area or region;

21 “(iii) identifies gaps between the cur-
22 rent and expected demand and supply of
23 labor and skills in that section or group in
24 the local area or region;

1 “(iv) contains the results of a survey
2 or focus group interviews of employers,
3 labor organizations, and other relevant in-
4 dividuals and organizations in the local
5 area or region; and

6 “(v) contains data regarding—

7 “(I) specific employment oppor-
8 tunities offered by industries in the
9 local area or region;

10 “(II) specific skills desired for
11 employment opportunities offered by
12 industries in the local area or region;

13 “(III) occupations and positions
14 in the local area or region that are
15 difficult to fill;

16 “(IV) specific skills desired for
17 occupations and positions in the local
18 area or region that are difficult to fill;

19 “(V) areas of growth and decline
20 among industries and occupations in
21 the local area or region;

22 “(VI) specific skills desired for
23 areas of growth among industries and
24 occupations in the local area or re-
25 gion; and

1 “(VII) specific inventories of
2 skills of unemployed or under-
3 employed individuals in the local area
4 or region.

5 “(F) STRATEGIC SKILLS GAP ACTION
6 PLAN.—The term ‘strategic skills gap action
7 plan’ means a plan based on the strategic skills
8 gap assessment that—

9 “(i) identifies—

10 “(I) specific barriers to adequate
11 supply of labor and skills in demand
12 in a specific industry sector of related
13 occupations that is producing jobs in
14 the local area or region; and

15 “(II) activities that will remove
16 or alleviate the barriers described in
17 subclause (I) that could be under-
18 taken by the local board, community
19 college, or postsecondary vocational
20 institution;

21 “(ii) specifies how the local board,
22 community college, or postsecondary voca-
23 tional institution may integrate the activi-
24 ties described in clause (i) within the local
25 area or region; and

1 “(iii) identifies resources and strate-
2 gies that may be used in the local area or
3 region to address the skills gaps for both
4 unemployed and employed workers in that
5 industry sector.

6 “(6) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—
7 There is authorized to be appropriated to the Sec-
8 retary such sums as may be necessary to carry out
9 this subsection.”.