

## ***America COMPETES Act (H.R. 4521)***

### House Education and Labor Committee Provisions

The success and competitiveness of the American economy depends on the strength of our nation's workforce. The *America COMPETES Act* will connect our nation's students and workers with the skills they need to succeed in high-tech industries while keeping our economy competitive in the years ahead. These investments will allow more K-12 schools to offer their students classes in computer sciences and create low-cost pathways for college STEM credits, and it builds on the bipartisan support for apprenticeships by expanding high-quality pre-apprenticeship and Registered Apprenticeship opportunities. Importantly, the jobs created by this legislation include protections to ensure workers are paid a decent wage.

#### **Helps Workers Secure Good-Paying Jobs**

- The *America COMPETES Act* will support American workers and provide employers a new pipeline of talent by creating nearly 1 million additional apprenticeship opportunities over the next 5 years.
  - This legislation contains the *National Apprenticeship Act of 2022*, a slightly revised version of the bipartisan *National Apprenticeship Act of 2021* (H.R. 447), which the House passed on February 5, 2021.
  - The *National Apprenticeship Act of 2022* will expand Registered Apprenticeships, which provide workers with paid, on-the-job-training. Registered Apprenticeship have been shown to be the most successful approach to growing a highly skilled workforce for in-demand occupations.
  - According to the Department of Labor, workers in Registered Apprenticeships earn an average of \$15 an hour, and 94 percent of those who complete Registered Apprenticeships are employed upon completion, earning an average starting wage of more than \$70,000 annually.

#### **Expands Access to STEM Education**

- The *America COMPETES Act* invests in connecting students with high-quality STEM education to help prepare the next generation for success.
  - The legislation authorizes a new competitive grant program to support equitable access to postsecondary STEM pathways that expose students to high-quality STEM coursework, reduce college costs, and improve postsecondary credit transfers.
  - The legislation authorizes a new competitive grant program to increase equitable access to computer science education and computational thinking skills for students who are enrolled in elementary schools and secondary schools operated by local educational agencies.

#### **Expands International Education Programs**

- The *America COMPETES Act* reauthorizes the international education programs under Title VI of the *Higher Education Act of 1965* to:
  - Increase and expand existing foreign language and area studies programs across the country;
  - Build international education capacity at minority-serving institutions; and
  - Promote opportunities for students and professionals to increase their knowledge of world regions, international business, and over 200 foreign languages at all levels of higher education.

### **Increases Transparency with Confucius Institutes and Foreign Gift Reporting**

- The *America COMPETES Act* establishes new transparency requirements for Confucius Institutes.
  - The legislation requires the U.S. Department of Education, in collaboration with the National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine, to review Confucius Institutes to ensure they protect academic freedom, and for institutions to post their agreements with Confucius Institutes publicly. Institutions that fail to comply would lose access to federal grants provided under the *Higher Education Act*, except for federal student aid under Title IV.
  - The legislation comprehensively updates requirements of institutional reporting of foreign gifts and contracts by:
    - Amending Section 117 of the *Higher Education Act* to capture additional foreign gifts and contracts received by institutions of higher education totaling more than \$100,000 in any given year and \$250,000 in three years; and
    - Adding a new reporting requirement for faculty and staff that receive gifts or enter into a contract with a foreign entity of which the value is \$50,000 or more.

### **Establishes Telecommunications Workforce Training Grant Program**

- The *America COMPETES Act* authorizes a telecommunications sector workforce training program – called the Improving Minority Participation and Careers Telecommunications Act (IMPACT) – administered by the Department of Labor in coordination with the Commerce Department’s Director of the Office of Minority Broadband Initiatives and the Secretary of Education.
  - The legislation authorizes \$100 million to be available over 6 years for Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs), and Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs) to develop job training programs in partnership with industry, Registered Apprenticeships, or labor organizations to prepare students for jobs in the telecommunications workforce.
  - This provision builds on a similar concept that was included in the Senate-passed *United States Innovation and Competition Act (USICA)*.