

LABOR AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Resolution LWD-16-23

ESTABLISHING AND SUSTAINING FUNDING SOURCES TO INCREASE COMMUNITY COLLEGES' CAPACITY TO CREATE, ADAPT AND MAINTAIN QUALITY CAREER TECHNICAL EDUCATION (CTE) COURSES AND PROGRAMS THAT ARE RESPONSIVE TO REGIONAL LABOR MARKET NEED.

WHEREAS, estimated by 2020, two-thirds of jobs throughout the country will require a postsecondary education;

WHEREAS, according to a recent assessment of adult skill levels conducted across 24 developed countries, 36 million adults in the U.S. have low skills, threatening their ability to secure employment and earn sufficient wage;

WHEREAS, low level skills and low levels of literacy are particularly persistent among individuals in communities of color, which will make up a majority of the U.S. population by 2043;

WHEREAS, the fastest-growing segments of our labor force have some of the lowest levels of educational attainment;

WHEREAS, the rate of low literacy among black adults is two times higher than it is among all adults generally (35 percent v. 18 percent); and the gap is even higher among Hispanic adults; 43 percent have low levels of literacy and 56 percent have low numeracy skills;

WHEREAS, the Obama Administration has set aggressive goals for postsecondary attainment in the United States and emphasized the unique role community colleges can play in achieving them;

WHEREAS, individuals lacking in the necessary skills are placed at a greater disadvantage in finding meaningful employment;

WHEREAS, employers need a pipeline of quality workers with different levels of skill derived from postsecondary education and training;

WHEREAS, employers in key industries have difficulty filling job openings because the workforce skills and aptitudes required are in short supply;

WHEREAS, the National Black Caucus of State Legislators (NBCSL) understands the necessity to connect employers with those seeking jobs and the need for states to focus on strategic industry partnerships;

WHEREAS, community colleges have a long history as leaders in workforce education, collaboration with business and industry to meet local employment needs;

WHEREAS, community colleges enroll more than 6.7 million credit students annually, more than a third of all undergraduates nationally; and serves almost as many additional students through

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workforce training and other such non-credit courses; and

WHEREAS, free community college would enable those attending to take better advantage of its services and resources.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the members of the National Black Caucus of State Legislators (NBCSL) call upon state leaders who want to increase postsecondary credential attainment to reassess and address the performance of their community colleges, particularly for low income and unprepared students relating to the regional economy;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the members of the NBCSL encourage and support state legislation that enhances the ability of community colleges and the public workforce system to collaborate with businesses, economic development institutions and other state agencies that help firms develop products and processes, secure and grow markets and take advantage of a region's competitive assets;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NBCSL support legislation that establishes a clear vision of the alignment of workforce development, postsecondary education and economic development at the regional level; improve student success and credential completion in community colleges; and identify and target priority clusters and industry sectors critical to regional competitiveness and expansion, and promoting partnerships that engage community colleges in economic development;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NBCSL support legislation that creates pathways and curricula driven by industry and labor market needs, contextualizing basic skills and workplace readiness skills into pathway curricula, developing model Career Technical Education (CTE) curricula and ensuring that career pathways meet the needs of non-traditional students;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NBCSL support federal and state legislation establishing a sustained funding source to increase community colleges' capacity to create, adapt and maintain quality CTE courses and programs that are responsive to regional labor market need; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States, the Vice President of the United States, members of the United States House of Representatives and the United States Senate, and other federal and state government officials as appropriate.

SPONSOR: Senator Ronald Rice (NJ)

Committee of Jurisdiction: Labor and Workforce Development Policy Committee

Certified by Committee Co-Chairs: Senator Ron Rice (NJ) and Assemblywoman Annette Robinson (NY)

Ratified in Plenary Session: Ratification Date is December 4, 2015

Ratification is certified by: Senator Catherine Pugh (MD), President