

# Opportunity Agenda

## SKILLS Act

### *Supporting Knowledge and Investing in Lifelong Skills*

The SKILLS Act, S.1911, transforms our broken workforce development and training system into a more responsive and efficient program that will better enable workers to compete in the 21<sup>st</sup> century economy. Nationally, despite spending \$18 billion annually on federal job training programs, there are nearly 4 million unfilled jobs and 11 million unemployed Americans. To bridge this gap, the SKILLS Act empowers job creators, reduces bureaucracy, and provides American workers with a more flexible and effective workforce development and training system. The U.S. House of Representatives passed the SKILLS Act (H.R. 803), sponsored by Representative Virginia Foxx (R-NC), in March 2013.

### **Preparing American Workers for Today's In-Demand Jobs**

*Focusing on Today's In-Demand Jobs, While Also Reforming Job Corps, Adult Education and Vocational Rehabilitation Programs*

- Eliminating delays that hinder job seekers from immediately accessing job training services.
- Modernizing programs to ensure education and training focuses on today's in-demand jobs.
- Supporting young job seekers by reducing the age limitation from 18 to 16.
- Ensuring youth have the opportunity to receive a high school diploma and/or a recognized postsecondary credential upon completion of the Job Corps program.
- Increasing provider accountability to ensure high-quality services for disadvantaged youth.
- Focusing on teaching adult learners basic literacy and math skills alongside occupational skills.
- Strengthening programs for individuals with disabilities transitioning into employment.

### **Streamlining National Workforce Training Efforts to Better Serve Job Seekers**

*Streamlining Workforce Training Programs and Improving Accountability and Transparency*

- Streamlining 35 programs and establishing a single fund to create a more user-friendly system and ensure more resources reach job seekers by reducing administrative overhead.
- Creating common performance measures and independent program evaluations every 5 years.
- Ensuring a percentage of funds are targeted to individuals with unique barriers to employment.

### **Strengthening Business Engagement in Workforce Development and Training**

- Strengthening the role of job creators in the workforce development system by ensuring 2/3 of state and local workforce investment boards (WIB) are made up of employers.
- Creating regular workforce analyses to ensure WIBs are focused on today's in-demand jobs.

### **Empowering State and Local Government Leaders to be More Efficient and Effective**

- Requiring state and local leaders to outline strategies to serve at-risk youth, individuals with disabilities, veterans, and other workers with unique barriers to employment.
- Empowering governors to designate workforce areas to better align resources and continuing to allow states to create a unified statewide workforce development plan.
- Simplifying the current system that prevents many community colleges from offering workforce development and job training and permitting direct contracting with community colleges.
- Providing governors with program management tools to maximize service delivery for local needs.