

Promoting Innovations to 21st Century Careers Act

U.S. Senator Patty Murray

THE PROBLEM – A WIDENING SKILLS GAP

- A highly educated and skilled workforce is an indispensable key to the nation's economic success – particularly in this constantly changing, knowledge-based, technology-driven, global economy.
- Yet the United States ranks only 11th in graduation rates out of the 30 Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) member nations, and one-third of all U.S. high school students will not graduate on time.
- Some economists estimate that by 2012 there will be a shortage of more than 7 million workers with an associate degree or higher.
- Millions of jobs in thriving industries are left unfilled in the U.S., often because of a lack of skilled workers.

A NEW APPROACH – INNOVATION AND COLLABORATION

- **The Promoting Innovations to 21st Century Act establishes a new \$912 million federal grant program to support state and regional partnerships** in developing creative strategies to help high school age youth prepare for a full range of postsecondary education options and careers.
- State and regional partnerships, which will include high schools, post-secondary education, business, workforce and economic development, labor and other key players, are a critical component of this legislation.
- These collaborative partnerships will allow students to access help each step of the way as they transition from high school, to postsecondary education, and on to a successful career.

FEDERAL SUPPORT – GRANT FUNDING FOR STATE PARTNERSHIPS

- State and regional partnerships, either existing or new, will be eligible to compete for grants, with each state partnership potentially eligible for a grant.
- Partnerships should include members from at least secondary and postsecondary education, business and trade organizations, economic development, workforce investment boards, registered apprenticeships, and organized labor leadership.
- Grants range from one-year planning grants to five-year implementation grants. Some of the allowable grant activities include: Creating career pathways, including curriculum and coursework development; creating coherent academic and guidance counseling strategies tied to career pathways; one-to-one mentoring and work-based experiences; leveraging existing youth development funds; modernization of educational equipment and spaces; development of registered apprenticeship programs; and one-stop youth career services enhancement.
- These career pathways will provide students the flexibility to change their areas of interest and include efforts to identify, engage, and reintegrate high school age youth who may have dropped out of school.

ACCOUNTABILITY – MEASURING SUCCESS FOR OUR STUDENTS

- Graduation rates, enrollment and attainment in postsecondary education, and longer term labor market measurements will ensure strong accountability of the grants. The use of data already collected under federal statute will minimize administrative burdens.

A HOME FOR INNOVATION - THE NATIONAL ACADEMIC AND CAREER INNOVATION CENTER

- The bill establishes a National Academic and Career Innovation Center under the agreement of the U.S. Departments of Education, Labor, and Commerce and the direction of a Board.
- The Center will manage the grant program; support state and regional capacity building; and implement research and evaluation programs to document and disseminate best practices and exemplary state curricula.