
H.R.1655 Jobs to Compete Act Fact Sheet

On March 10, 2023, Ranking Member Robert C. “Bobby” Scott (VA-03) introduced H.R.1655, the Jobs to Compete Act. The bill has been referred to the House Committee on Education and the Workforce.

The legislation would allow students to use federal Pell Grants for high-quality, shorter-term job training programs that are between 150-600 clock hours in length for the first time. Currently, students may only use Pell Grants for programs longer than 15 weeks. By expanding Pell Grant eligibility, the bill would help close the skills gap and provide workers with the job training and credentials they need for careers in high-demand fields.

While several distinct Short-term Pell bills have been introduced in the 118th Congress, the Jobs to Compete Act contains unique accountability measures for institutions. Below is a short summary of the changes proposed in the bill:

- To be considered an eligible job training program the program must adhere to the following guidelines:
 - Between 150 – 600 clock hours of instructional time over 8 – 15 weeks (sec. 3, pg. 4)
 - Provides an education aligned with the requirements of a high-skill, high-wage, or in-demand industry in the geographic area the program is provided (sec. 3, pg. 5)
 - Be a career and technical education program at an eligible institution of higher education, which includes proprietary institutions (sec. 3, pg. 5)
 - Provides a stackable, portable, and transferrable credential, when applicable in a given industry (sec. 3, pg. 8)
 - Provides direct disclosure to prospective students on information about price and student outcome (sec. 3, pg. 10)
 - Cannot be offered exclusively through distance education (sec. 3, pg. 12)
 - Provides academic and career counseling for students (sec. 3, pg. 13)
 - Prepares students for gainful employment (sec. 3, pg. 14)
 - Offered by an institution for at least 1 year prior to eligibility (sec. 3, pg. 14)
- To ensure students receiving federal Pell Grants are earning high-quality postsecondary credentials, programs eligible under this bill must meet value-added earning requirements including:
 - Demonstrates that students who complete the program receive a median increase of 20% of the median earnings of students prior to enrolling in a program within 18 months of the program being approved as an eligible workforce program. (sec. 3, pg. 9)
 - This would be calculated by comparing students’ earnings 6 months prior to enrollment and their earnings 6 months after completing such programs. (sec. 3, pg. 16)
 - Demonstrates that students who complete the program have median earnings greater than the median earnings of students with a high school diploma or GED within the first 18 months of the program being approved as an eligible workforce program. (sec. 3, pg. 9)

- This would be calculated by comparing students' earnings 6 months after completing such programs with state earning data for adults from 25-35 years old with only a high school diploma. (sec. 3, pg. 16)
- Has a verified completion rate of at least 70% (sec. 3, pg. 14)
 - Students would count as completed if they complete the program within 150% of the normal time for completion. (sec. 3, pg. 14)
- Has a verified job placement rate of at least 70% (sec. 3, pg. 15)
- Demonstrates that at least 50% of revenue from tuition and fees is expended on educational spending. (sec. 3, pg. 15)
 - Educational spending is defined as funds expended on instruction or instructional activities, academic support, and support services. It specifically excludes funds expended on recruiting activities, advertising, or other pre-enrollment expenditures. (sec. 3, pg. 22)
- All programs must be certified by their state to receive initial approval by the U.S. Department of Education for a period of two years. (sec. 3, pg. 18)
- The bill also establishes an interagency data coordination between the Department of Education and Department of Labor to effectively collect, analyze, and disseminate data related to workforce programs. (sec. 4, pg. 24)