



# AT A GLANCE: MEETING THE DEMAND FOR SKILLED WORKERS

Two out of every three jobs in today's economy require more than a high school education, but less than half of Americans ages 25 to 34 have a postsecondary credential. *The College Affordability Act* will help fill the demand for skilled workers by better aligning our higher education system to meet the needs of the modern economy.

## ***The College Affordability Act* expands students' access to high-quality programs that start them on a path to lifelong learning. The bill...**

- Provides all individuals access to free community college, including tuition and fees, freeing up students' federal financial aid dollars to cover non-tuition expenses.
- Allows Pell Grants to be used for high-quality, short-term programs that can launch graduates into successful careers while also giving them a path to a two- or four-year degree.
- Invests in dual enrollment and early high school programs that allow students to earn free college credits while still in high school.
- Improves the transferability of short-term credentials and college credits to accelerate students' path to a two- or four-year degree.
- Increases total Pell eligibility from 12 to 14 semesters and allows students to use unspent Pell dollars toward a graduate degree, empowering students to continue building their skills.
- Expands students' access to work study opportunities that align with the local and regional economy.

## ***The College Affordability Act* holds all schools accountable for providing students a quality education that leads to a rewarding career. The bill...**

- Requires college accreditors to evaluate schools using student outcomes in completion and workforce participation.
- Cracks down on low-quality skills programs that provide students meaningless credentials that have no value in the job market.
- Supports schools in developing new strategies to shorten time to completion and better align programs with the needs of employers.
- Requires non-degree credential programs to partner with industry and demonstrate value in the job market.
- Rewards colleges that succeed in enrolling and graduating low-income students on time.
- Improves data collection to provide better information to students, policymakers, and the public – including employers.

## ***The College Affordability Act* equips schools and students with tools to adapt to the changing demands of the economy. The bill...**

- Expands skills development opportunities for students already in the workforce.
- Invests in students entering STEM fields and opens more resources to boost postgraduate degree attainment at Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Tribal Colleges and Universities, and Minority-Serving Institutions
- Makes students more competitive in the global job market through investments in areas like career and technical education and language, cultural, and regional education.
- Improves programs that recruit prospective teachers to address shortage areas like STEM and special education.
- Improves and expands the Public Service Loan Forgiveness program to incentivize careers in public service.