

## **BILL SUMMARY: H.R. 4297, THE WORKFORCE INVESTMENT IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2012**

House Republicans on the Education and Workforce Committee have released a bill to reauthorize the Workforce Investment Act. H.R. 4297 consolidates three previous bills introduced by Congresswoman Virginia Foxx (R-NC), Congressman Buck McKeon (R-CA), and Congressman Joe Heck (R-NV). The bill consolidates many existing workforce programs, enables states to designate funding and services, and restructures workforce investment boards.

- The bill would take 25 of the 47 workforce training programs identified in a January 2011 GAO report and consolidate them into a single funding stream. This is a change from the previously introduced Foxx bill which consolidated 33 programs into four funding streams. Five veterans' programs are no longer included from the original proposed consolidation.
- The 27 programs are consolidated into the new Workforce Investment Fund, which will provide formula funds to state and local workforce investment boards (WIBs) to create universal employment and training programs for all adults, unemployed workers, and youth. This new fund will ensure that all major job training and related services are co-located and administered through the nation's workforce investment system and the nation's One-Stop Career Centers.
- The Workforce Investment Fund includes a new formula for state and local areas. The formula is based on four factors: the number of individuals ages 16 through 72 in the civilian labor force; the number of individuals who are unemployed; the number of individuals who are experiencing long term unemployment defined as 15 weeks or more; and the number of disadvantaged youth ages 16 to 24. Funding is authorized at FY 2012 levels.
- The bill requires state and local WIBs to detail how they will serve dislocated workers, low-income individuals, individuals with limited English proficiency, homeless individuals, individuals training for nontraditional employment, youth, older workers, ex-offenders, migrant and seasonal farmworkers, refugee and entrants, veterans (including disabled and homeless veterans), and Native Americans. This addition is to address the needs of special populations in lieu of the individual programs slated for consolidation.
- The bill encourages states to set aside 18 percent of their Workforce Investment Fund to create Statewide Youth Challenge Grants.
- The bill would require that WIBs be comprised of two-thirds representation from the business community. Additionally, it would strip current requirements that the board include representation from community colleges (when available), local education stakeholders, WIA partner programs, and labor organizations.
- The bill authorizes states to develop and submit unified state plans and, if they choose, to consolidate additional federal job training dollars and social services programs into the Workforce Investment Fund. Among the programs that may be rolled into the Workforce Investment Fund, include: all programs authorized under the Workforce Investment Act, including adult basic education and vocational rehabilitation programs; and programs under the Trade Adjustment Act. Funding for Perkins Career and Technical Education was allowed to be consolidated under the Foxx bill, but is omitted from this bill.

- The bill eliminates the requirement in current law that local WIBs give priority to low-income individuals.
- The bill allows states to determine what standards will be required for eligible training providers. It requires state WIBs to set eligibility criteria for training providers that take into account the performance of providers and whether the training programs relate to occupations that are in-demand.
- The bill rewrites the accountability system included in current law to create common performance measures for the Workforce Investment Fund, the Adult Education program (Title II of WIA), and the Vocational Rehabilitation program. This includes requiring state WIBs to report on the number of individuals who receive work-ready and training services; the number of individuals who successfully exited out of work-ready and training services; the number of individuals who successfully secured employment in the field in which they were trained; and the average cost per participant of those individuals who received work-ready and training services during the most recent program year and fiscal year, and the preceding five program years.

## **PROGRAMS CONSOLIDATED UNDER HR 4297**

### **Department of Labor**

- WIA Adult
- WIA Youth
- WIA Dislocated Worker
- Employment Services / Wagner – Peysner Funded Activities
- H-1B Job Training Grants Program
- Job Corps
- National Farmworker Jobs Program
- Native American Employment and Training
- Reintegration of Ex-Offenders
- Senior Community Service Employment Program
- Transition Assistance Program
- WANTO
- YouthBuild

### **Department of Education**

- Grants to States for Workplace and Community Transition Training for Incarcerated Individuals
- Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers Program
- Projects with Industry
- State-Supported Employment Services Program

### **Department of Health and Human Services**

- Refugee and Entrant Assistance – Voluntary Agency Matching Grants Program
- Refugee and Entrant Assistance – Targeted Assistance Grants
- Refugee and Entrant Assistance – Social Services Program
- Refugee and Entrant Assistance – Targeted Assistance Discretionary Program
- Tribal Work Grants

### **Department of Interior**

- Conservation Activities by Youth Service Organizations
- Indian Employment Assistance
- Indian Vocational Training – United Tribes Technical College

### **Environmental Protection Agency**

- Brownfield Job Training Cooperative Agreements

### **Department of Agriculture**

- SNAP Employment and Training Program

### **Department of Justice**

- Second Chance Act Prisoner Reentry Initiative