

U.S. Sen. Baldwin: Introduces legislation to boost apprenticeships

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin, a member of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee, today introduced legislation to invest in public-private partnerships, boost apprenticeship programs and help close the skills gap.

“In Wisconsin, I’ve seen how public-private partnerships can best address the workforce readiness challenges we face,” said Senator Baldwin. “This legislation will scale up our apprenticeship programs and provide more people with the skills they need to succeed. If we invest in public-private partnerships, we can boost workforce readiness and provide our businesses the skilled workers they need to grow our economy.”

The Promoting Apprenticeships through Regional Training Networks for Employers’ Required Skills (PARTNERS) Act would establish a grant program to support the creation and expansion of industry and sector partnerships to help small and medium-sized businesses develop work-based learning programs and provide mentoring and support services for workers. A bipartisan House version of this legislation was introduced by Congresswoman Suzanne Bonamici (D-OR) and Congressman Drew Ferguson (R-GA).

Businesses—especially small and medium-sized businesses—often lack the infrastructure to establish apprenticeships or work-based learning programs on their own. Senator Baldwin’s legislation would address this challenge by establishing a

program to provide states with grants that will help create or expand local public-private partnership apprenticeship initiatives.

With the PARTNERS Act, states would submit applications to the Secretary of Labor for local initiatives to start or expand apprenticeship programs. The state would then provide grants of up to \$500,000 for two years to local public-private partnerships to bring industry and education partners together to start and run work-based training programs, as well as worker support services that help businesses develop apprenticeship initiatives.