

U.S. Sen. Baldwin: Introduces bill to modernize and expand apprenticeships programs to meet 21st century workforce need

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – Senators Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) and Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) are leading legislation to modernize, streamline, and expand apprenticeship programs to connect more Americans with good-paying jobs, meet businesses' need for more skilled workers, and grow the economy. The *National Apprenticeship Act of 2023* would remove barriers and expand opportunities for employers and apprentices to participate in apprenticeship programs, especially in high-demand industries, rural areas, and populations not traditionally enrolled in apprenticeship programs. The *National Apprenticeship Act of 2023* would, for the first time, reauthorize the *National Apprenticeship Act of 1937* to meet current workforce needs.

“To grow our economy, expand the middle class, and meet businesses' workforce demands, we need to ensure workers have access to the training and skills to land good-paying jobs. And apprenticeship programs are a time-tested way of doing just that. When we invest in workforce training programs, we are investing in our families, our future, and our Made in Wisconsin economy,” **said Senator Baldwin.** “The National Apprenticeship Act will invest in our skilled workforce to connect more Wisconsinites with family-supporting careers, whether it be in the traditional trades like construction, plumbing, welding, and electrical work, or new and emerging industries like cybersecurity, advanced manufacturing, and computer science. This legislation will both help Wisconsinites get a job that gives them economic security and help businesses find the skilled workers they need.”

“Workforce shortages continue to have a significant impact on Alaskan communities and businesses—and the inability of apprenticeship funding to be used for unique needs such as transportation and housing for students – only exacerbates that issue. After engaging with Alaskan and national labor leaders to identify their greatest needs, I’m proud to introduce bipartisan legislation to provide the flexibility and investments to allow states to bolster workforce training and address barriers to building a skilled workforce; this includes my provision to put in place a new rural apprenticeship demonstration program,” **said Senator Murkowski**. “I’ve seen firsthand the benefits of apprenticeships in Alaska. They strengthen our workforce, promote a stronger economy, and bolster the development and sustainability of Alaska’s rural and remote communities. I’m excited about these new strategies that engage our youth to help meet our workforce needs.”

Apprenticeship programs provide earn-while-you-learn training that get workers access to high-paying careers in high-demand industries. According to the Department of Labor, about [93 percent](#) of participants who complete a Registered Apprenticeship (RA) program are employed upon completion, earning an average starting wage of above [\\$77,000 annually](#). And, businesses [earn \\$1.44 back](#) for every dollar invested toward their apprentices in an RA program. As employers across industries are struggling with workforce shortages, it has never been more important to modernize and invest in our National Apprenticeship System.

The *National Apprenticeship Act of 2023* will among other things help employers to develop apprenticeship programs, especially in new, high-demand industries like advanced manufacturing and renewable energy, invest in attracting new apprentices, and remove barriers for program participants. Specifically, the Baldwin-Murkowski bill would:

- Provide resources for small- and medium-sized employers to develop their own apprenticeship programs to attract talent with the skills employers need.
- Encourage the development of apprenticeship programs in innovative new industries like advanced manufacturing, cybersecurity and information technology, computer science, clean energy, or other in-demand sectors or occupations.
- Create new and innovative rural demonstration grants for low-density areas with acute labor shortages.
- Improve wrap around services such as child care, elder care, transportation, and housing to help ensure that would-be apprentices can complete their apprenticeship training.

- Streamline the apprenticeship application process, improve reciprocity for employers who operate apprenticeship programs across multiple states, and encourage groups of employers to work with labor, education, and economic development partners together to develop sector partnerships to develop career pathways for new industries.
- Provide resources for program sponsors to attract participants with barriers to employment and populations that have not-traditionally enrolled in apprenticeship programs.

Full text of this legislation is available [here](#).

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