



Lancaster Chamber

People | Business | Community

DEVELOPING & BUILDING THE WORKFORCE

BACKGROUND

Across Lancaster County, Pennsylvania and the United States, businesses are struggling to hire skilled workers – people trained for jobs in industries like healthcare, technology and manufacturing and for jobs in the trades like plumbers and electricians. In a late 2019 survey of Lancaster County employers, 74% indicated workforce availability and development was the most important local/regional priority to their business.

The impact of technology, automation, and artificial intelligence on the workplace is only going to exacerbate this challenge. Reports suggest nearly 60 percent of jobs will be significantly impacted by the future of work and these workers will need training to stay in their industry or find a new job.

In recent years, Congress has taken important, bipartisan steps to reauthorize the Perkins Career and Technical Education Act and increase investments in adult education, apprenticeship, and other workforce programs. Leaders of businesses support policy solutions that would expand investments in higher education, work-based learning, and in students and workers who need support as they learn critical skills, as well as solutions that provide qualified workers for positions that employers are unable to fill due to changing workforce demographics.

Two recent bills introduced by Congressman Smucker, the USA Workforce Tax Credit Act and the Workforce for an Expanding Economy Act, were created to develop the country's workforce and fill available jobs.

The USA Workforce Tax Credit Act would encourage charitable donations for community-based apprenticeship initiatives, career and technical education, workforce development and K-12 educational preparedness. With a tax credit cap of \$2 billion, one-half would focus on job preparation initiatives and the other half set aside for educational preparedness scholarships for K-12 students.

The Workforce for an Expanding Economy Act would create an immigration visa system for less-skilled workers to do year-round, non-farm work at approved employer locations for specifically approved jobs. Employers would be required to show they are unable to fill the vacant positions, pay fair wages and utilize E-verify.

POSITION STATEMENT

The Lancaster Chamber supports the USA Workforce Tax Credit Act and the Workforce for an Expanding Economy Act. The USA Workforce Tax Credit Act will allow businesses a way to utilize a portion of their tax payment to solve the workforce challenge and help to recruit and train the next generation of talent. The Workforce for an Expanding Economy Act will address the shortage of available, qualified workers through a temporary, flexible worker visa system while Congress works to reform our outdated immigration laws.

Approved by Advocacy Committee on 3.6.20.

Approved by Board of Trustees on 3.17.20.