



Monthly Report

In regard to the U.S. workforce, apprenticeship programs have gained traction in both the House and the Senate. Senator Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) introduced a bill that seeks aid for the development of apprenticeship programs that are focused on technical skills at the National Laboratories and National Nuclear Security Administration. H.R. 2679 and S. 1623, both companion bills, look to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow tax-free distributions from section 529 college savings plans for expenses related to registered apprenticeship programs. Other bills (S. 1466 and H.R. 2721) introduced this month would create grant programs within the Department of Labor to support cybersecurity apprenticeship programs. Legislatures on both sides of the aisle are discussing solutions to expand apprenticeship programs that focus on technical skills within the United States. Several hearings that will focus on apprenticeship programs are scheduled in June.

In an attempt to pass the first minimum wage increase in a decade, House Democrats worked to end a standoff with progressives on legislation that would boost the minimum wage to \$15-an-hour. The bill currently has 205 cosponsors - only 13 short from a simple majority- and is expected to be brought to the House floor later this summer. Many of the hesitant Democrats represent red states that are more reluctant to endorse a bill that local businesses are likely to disagree with. In an attempt to capture moderate Democrat support, a proposed solution is a "regional" minimum wage. This would allow regions with a higher cost of living, such as Seattle or Central Florida, to set a \$15-an-hour wage while regions with a lower cost of living have the ability to

raise the minimum wage at their own discretion. Despite the traction in the House to pass a minimum wage bill, the sentiment is not matched by the Republican-led Senate and would most likely not pass.

During the month of May, we met with Representative Jim Langevin's (D-RI) office to discuss our interest in workforce development and TAP. The office was very interested in what we had to say. The Congressman is known as a champion for CTE on the Hill and recently, they are interested in looking more at the counseling aspect of this sector and learning more about it. We discussed the importance of career counselors to the goal of increasing apprenticeship and the need for specialized training to provide quality counseling. The staffer was very interested in the TAP portion as well and we provided materials to her regarding our recommendations for the program and she considered it for an amendment to the funding bill currently being negotiated. Ultimately, the timeline proved too short, but she wants to continue the conversation and learn more about NCDA and career counseling more generally.

Until next month,

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