

**Washington, D.C.** – Congressman John Barrow (GA-12) introduced legislation last week that will help make technical school education more affordable for folks who are out of work due to the economic downturn. H.R. 5594 will authorize the Department of Labor to create a pilot program under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) that will provide a subsidy of up to \$2,000 for technical school training. Funding for this “Technical School Subsidy Program” would be given to local Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) that would make funding available to prospective students through local One-Stop delivery systems as an education subsidy. “Getting folks back to work is my highest priority,” said Barrow. “Over the last few months I’ve toured businesses large and small all across the 12th District, and I’ve had the opportunity to visit a number of technical schools and training facilities. After talking to folks, it’s clear that we need to make sure that folks who are out of work right now have access to the training they need to get and keep good paying jobs in the future.”

Many out of work Americans are using the economic downturn to go back to school and increase their ability to get a new job. The skills acquired through career and technical training are often the difference between getting a job or promotion, and missing out on it entirely. Career and technical schools also allow students to get new skills in high-demand fields without spending a lot of money. It also gives local businesses the opportunity to hire qualified workers from local communities, rather than having to look elsewhere to build up the workforce.

The Association for Career and Technical Education, the nation’s largest not-for-profit education association dedicated to the advancement of education that prepares youth and adults for successful careers, has endorsed Barrow’s legislation, saying:

“This bill recognizes the value that career and technical education programs can provide in helping unemployed Americans get the education and training needed to re-enter the workforce in high-wage, high-skill and high-demand occupations.

“One of the biggest concerns our members have expressed related to the Workforce Investment Act, which your bill seeks to amend, is the difficulty many individuals have in accessing training under the current law... A greater focus must be placed throughout the workforce system on increasing skills training to ensure individuals are prepared to succeed in the workforce on a long-term basis.”

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**Contact:** Jane Brodsky, (202) 225-2823

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