

In advance of President Obama's job creation address to Congress on Thursday evening, Congressman John Barrow (GA-12) today introduced legislation that will help folks learn new skills and increase their job market potential by making technical school education more affordable.

"Expanding the skills of today's job seekers is essential to helping them find and keep good paying jobs, and that's exactly what this bill does," said Congressman Barrow. "By partnering with technical schools and helping reduce the cost of tuition, this legislation will make it possible for job seekers to get new specialty skills, which in turn will help them get better jobs. I encourage the President to look at this idea and incorporate it into any job creation ideas he is planning to introduce."

H.R. 2851 will authorize the Department of Labor to create a pilot program under the Workforce Investment Act that will provide students 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 that would make funding available to prospective students through local one-stop delivery systems as an education subsidy.

As a result of the lingering economic downturn, many out of work Americans want to go back to school to increase their chances of landing a new job. The skills acquired through career and technical training are often the difference between getting a job or missing an opportunity. Career and technical schools allow students to acquire 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 their 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:

"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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