



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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Workforce Development Task Force Advances Agressive Agenda To Link Hard Working New Yorkers with Good Paying Jobs

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ALBANY – Senator Catharine Young (R,C,I- 57th District) and her colleagues on the Senate’s Task Force on Workforce Development have issued a report detailing how New York State can boost economic opportunities by enhancing job training initiatives that give everyone the skills for success. By providing residents the training they need to meet the demands of employers, more people will be able to find careers and employers could see growth, incentivizing them to expand their workforce.

“Supporting economic development and job creation efforts has always been a top priority for me. Everyone wants to have good paying jobs and the ability to build a career in New York State. During the hearings we heard from many employers who stated that they have thousands of jobs left unfilled because they can’t find properly trained workers,” said Senator Young.

“The Task Force’s recommendations will help position our state for economic success and prosperity. By establishing a solid foundation for employers we can reduce the gap between businesses who are looking for employees, and hardworking New Yorkers,” Senator Young said.

Since being established in March 2015, the Senate Task Force on Workforce Development has held a series of forums across the state that gathered input from leaders in business, labor, public education, higher education, local governments and workforce training and development. The Task Force has now issued its [preliminary report and recommendations](#) to

make the state's workforce development initiatives more effective.

The recommendations included:

- **Cultivate Forward-Facing Employment Data from the State Department of Labor:** While the current Department of Labor (DOL) data collection strategy underscores the reality of New York's employment opportunities, this data is rear-facing, and it can provide more tangible benefits to industries and job seekers by highlighting the areas that will need trained employees in coming years. The Task Force recommends an expansion of Department of Labor data to include forward-facing job data that can be used by employers and educators to accurately predict future needs and properly prepare the workforce for career opportunities.
- **Invest \$23 Million to Continue and Expand P-TECH Schools, and Make Them Permanent in State Statute:** College and career readiness is the new gauge used by education experts and advocates to show whether graduating students will be able to enter college without extra assistance/remediation and how likely a student will be to compete and attain gainful employment. New York State Pathways in Technology Schools, or "P-TECHs," are unique programs that allow students to obtain high school diplomas, while also earning a cost-free associates degree. The Task Force recommends committing \$23 million to support and expand P-Tech programs to other areas of the State to meet student demand and also codifying P-Tech programs into state law, providing them with a steady and reliable funding stream that eliminates uncertainty and gives reliability to participating students.
- **Increase Access to Career and Tech Programs at BOCES:** The Task Force recognizes the important role that BOCES plays in allowing school districts to share services and increase access career and tech programs that districts would not be able to develop in their individual capacities. Recommendations to accomplish this include: having the State Education Department work with districts to remove some of the stigma associated with taking classes through BOCES; having districts work to encourage students to take advantage of the career and technical education services BOCES offers; and increase the current salary cap for BOCES from \$30,000 to \$50,000 to attract and retain qualified and skilled teachers for career and tech programs. Senate Republican's budget proposals have included the increase in the cap for the past two years.

- **Increase Access to Continuing Adult Education Programs at BOCES:** Training students through career and technical education is an important step towards ensuring New York has the infrastructure in place to have a workforce that can meet the growing demands of the State's economy and fill empty jobs in new, specialized fields. The Task Force recommends increasing funding for continuing adult education at BOCES to expand current programming and access.
- **Invest \$12 Million to Continue and Expand Early College High Schools, and Make Them Permanent in State Statute:** Early College High Schools offer a solution to college affordability and unpreparedness. They offer students unprecedented access to college credit-bearing courses in high school and help dramatically reduce the need for remediation post-graduation. Like P-TECH, these schools struggle without a reliable funding structure that inhibits their growth and expansion. While the State Education Department has advocated for \$7 million in funding, the Task Force believes a larger investment of \$12 million is warranted for the growth and expansion of Early College High Schools, along with making them a permanent part of the education system.
- **Improve Participation in Apprenticeships by Promoting Coordination Between Guidance Counselors and Local Building Trades Councils:** The State Education Department, in consultation with the Department of Labor, is best suited to give guidance counselors the tools they need to present students the full complement of options available to them after high school, including apprenticeship programs that allow students to earn a paycheck while undergoing classroom learning under the supervision of a professional tradesman. The Task Force recommends the State Education Department issue guidelines to help school guidance counselors encourage and maximize valuable apprenticeship programs by coordinating with local building trades councils.
- **Increase Funding for the Next Generation Job Linkage Program and Enact the HIRE Program:** The Task Force recommends increased support for the state's Job Linkage Program to foster direct links between community college training programs and the needs of local employers. In addition, the state should enact the Help Individuals Reach Employment (HIRE) program – first proposed in the Senate's 2015-16 one-house budget - to connect recent graduates with certificate programs. A qualified applicant who graduates from SUNY or CUNY, but cannot find full-time employment could apply for a certificate program to enhance their employment marketability. Such certificate programs would be tailored to job market needs and be made available to all eligible applicants free of charge,

either on campus or online.

- **Establish New Degree or Certificate Programs Based on Future Regional Industry Needs:** The Task Force recommends requiring Regional Community College Councils to consult with and make recommendations to the community college boards of trustees on ways to create new degree or certificate programs, or restructure current programs, in order to increase successful job placement for future students. The Councils should also use Department of Labor data to consult with regional businesses to ensure their recommendations reflect actual need and facilitate student placement within those businesses.

As part of this year's state budget process, Senator Young also helped secure several investments in job training and workforce development initiatives, including:

- \$5 million for the Next Generation Job Linkage Program: The program works with employers to help identify potential jobs, define the skills necessary for those jobs, and provide the appropriate training to employees;
- \$5 million for the SUNY/CUNY Apprentice Initiative: The initiative targets training to help employers refine the skills of their new hires, and enable more experienced employees to upgrade their skills;
- \$7.9 million for the Workforce Development Institute (WDI): A statewide program that is highly successful working with businesses and the AFL-CIO, WDI provides focused training for workers, and workforce transition support to help prevent jobs from being outsourced to other states; and
- \$20 million in Additional Funding for Community Colleges: These institutions provide people of all ages the skills and education necessary to increase employment opportunities.

The full report with detailed findings and recommendations can be found at:

https://www.nysenate.gov/sites/default/files/articles/attachments/workforce_development_rep

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