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**SENATOR SKELOS ANNOUNCES THE CREATION OF NEW TASK FORCE ON
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**

**Senators Will Help Identify Ways to Improve Employee Training and Readiness to
Promote Private Sector Growth**

Senate Majority Leader Dean G. Skelos today announced the creation of the Senate Task Force on Workforce Development and appointed Senators Jack Martins (R-C-I, Mineola) and George A. Amedore, Jr. (R-C-I, Rotterdam) as Co-Chairs. The Task Force will review the state's existing programs designed to train both job seekers and existing employees for current and prospective employment opportunities, as well as help develop new initiatives to improve employee readiness, meet the needs of private sector employers, and create well-paying jobs to grow New York's economy.

Senator Skelos said, "The Senate wants to ensure that New Yorkers have access to effective job training services that can help them succeed in our rapidly changing economy. Senators Martins and Amedore will lead our members' review of workforce development programs to ensure they are meeting the demands of employers, and will help identify what additional resources may be needed to keep New York's economy growing by connecting new jobs with a highly skilled workforce."

Senator Martins, Chairman of the Senate Labor Committee, said, "Every New Yorker who wants a job should have one. Developing a skilled workforce and training people for high-demand jobs benefits us all – workers, employers, and our economy as a whole. Most importantly, it benefits families and communities. Connecting people to jobs will be our priority as we move forward. Partnering with labor, education and business, I am confident we can develop initiatives which will continue growing our economy and provide greater opportunities for workers and employers."

Senator Amedore said, "Workforce development programs are essential to bridge the gap between companies looking to grow and expand, and unemployed workers who need to learn the skills necessary for employment in today's changing economy. By investing in a first-rate, skilled workforce now, we will not only attract new businesses, but we will help existing businesses be more competitive and innovative. At the same time, we will ensure those businesses are able to fill the jobs they create with New Yorkers who are ready and able to be employed in skilled, good-paying positions."

Senator Skelos also announced the Task Force members, who include: Senator Phil Boyle (R-C-I, Suffolk County), Senator Rich Funke (R-C-I, Fairport), Senator Joseph Griffo (R-C-I, Rome), Senator William Larkin (R-C, Cornwall-on-Hudson), Senator Kenneth LaValle (R-C-I, Port Jefferson), Senator Carl Marcellino (R, Syosset), Senator Kathleen Marchione (R-C, Halfmoon), Senator Tom O'Mara (R-C, Big Flats), Senator Patricia Ritchie (R-C, Heuvelton),

Senator Susan Serino (R-C-I, Hyde Park), Senator James L. Seward (R-C-I, Oneonta), Senator Michael Venditto (R-C-I, Massapequa), and Senator Catharine Young (R-C-I, Olean).

According to the [U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics](#), there are 5 million job openings available nationwide as of January 2015. Despite a decrease in the unemployment rate, many of these jobs are likely to continue to go unfilled due to an ongoing skills gap.

Research released last month from [Deloitte and the Manufacturing Institute](#) found that while the country faces a need for nearly 3.5 million manufacturing jobs over the next decade, 2 million of those jobs are likely to go unfilled due to baby boomer retirement and too few young people who see manufacturing as a career. An article in the [Rochester Democrat and Chronicle](#) detailed how 23,000 jobs in Monroe County in 2013 were unfilled, and some persistently due to a lack of “middle skilled” employees in the region who are qualified for health care, tech, manufacturing and other skilled labor, like welding and mechanics.

The Task Force members will seek input from leaders in business, education, state and local governments, and other workforce experts to develop a better process to connect people who are getting trained with the open jobs that are available.

The Task Force will: examine the barriers and the incentives for institutions and businesses to assist students and existing employees in the acquisition of new skills; review state education policies to maximize opportunities for high school and college students to obtain industry certifications and take career-themed courses for jobs that are most in demand; discuss how to improve the sharing of information about regional and statewide workforce trends to ensure job training programs are targeting the skills needed by employers; explore the job training resources available to unemployed and under-employed New Yorkers to help them achieve self-sufficiency; and identify potential opportunities for additional collaboration between education and business communities.

The Task Force builds upon the Senate’s record of leadership in creating jobs and providing support for initiatives that help prepare workers for high-demand employment opportunities. Last year’s enacted budget included \$5 million for the Next Generation Job Linkage Program that works with employers to identify jobs, define skills, and provide training for new employees. In addition, \$4 million in funding was provided to the Workforce Development Institute (WDI) – a not-for-profit that works with businesses and the AFL-CIO to provide focused workforce training and transition support to help prevent jobs from being outsourced to other states – for its job training program, along with \$3 million for a new WDI manufacturing career development initiative.

The Senate’s budget resolution passed last week continues the WDI’s funding by restoring \$7 million that was not included in the Executive Budget proposal, and provides new funding for other workforce development and job training programs.

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