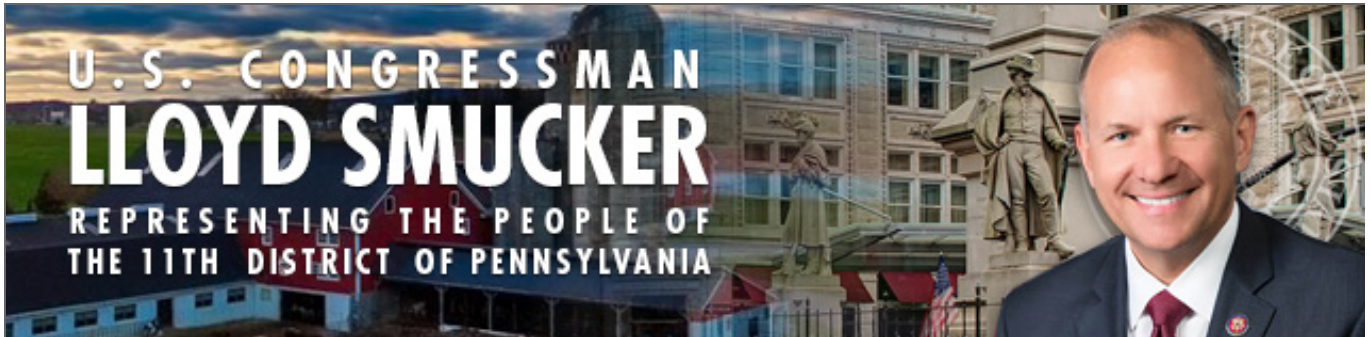


Subject: Celebrating Career and Technical Education Month!
Date: Tuesday, January 23, 2024 at 10:38:00 AM Eastern Standard Time
From: Congressman Lloyd Smucker
To: Pfingston, Chaston

News from Representative Smucker



IMPORTANT UPDATES *from* CONGRESSMAN SMUCKER

Dear Chaston,

January is Career and Technical Education Month and I wanted to take a moment to share with you some of my work in Congress to promote apprenticeships and vocational training in the United States.








As the first person in my family to attend high school, I entered the construction industry after earning my diploma. This experience taught me that there are many opportunities to obtain a well-paying, family-sustaining job outside of a standard bachelors degree program. Apprenticeships and other “earn-while-you-learn” educational programs provide important training that grows our workforce. That is why, as a member of the Committee on Education and the Workforce, one of my top priorities in Congress is to expand vocational and technical education opportunities.






As employers throughout the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the greater United States are struggling to match workers to available jobs, the need for vocational training is more critical than ever. The U.S. Labor Department recently [reported](#) that our nation had 9.6 million job openings at the end of August, and college enrollments have experienced a [record decline](#). Congress must take an “all-of-the-above” approach to education that prepares our students to successfully enter the workforce after completing their studies so that they can contribute to our economy through in-demand, high-paying jobs.

That is why I cosponsored the A Stronger Workforce for America Act (H.R. 6655), which updates the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) to put more Americans on the pathway to a successful career. **I authored several provisions in this bill**, including a codification of the Workforce Reentry Program to help individuals



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exiting the justice system get connected with stable jobs and expanding use of WIOA training dollars to high school students so they can explore diverse employment opportunities. H.R. 6655 also includes my priorities to reduce government red tape and allow more training programs to access the WIOA system and ensure that online skills development providers are eligible for WIOA dollars. These provisions will strengthen connections between employers and the workforce system and increase the amount of skills development provided under the law. This bill passed the Education and Workforce Committee on December 22, 2023, and you can learn more [here](#).

I also co-sponsored the Bipartisan Workforce Pell Act (H.R. 6585), which also passed the Education and the Workforce Committee on December 22, 2023. This bill would award Workforce Pell Grants to students enrolled in certain short-term workforce programs. These programs are a popular and flexible form of education that train students to serve others through practical skills. Encouraging investment in critical workforce development and apprenticeship programs is an important first step in our nation's economic recovery. You can read more about the bill [here](#).

You may be interested to know that **I also introduced the USA Workforce Tax Credit Act (H.R. 1656)**. My bill would create new tax credits for charitable contributions to community-based apprenticeship initiatives, career and technical education, and workforce development programs. Eligible nonprofits include educational institutions, community organizations, training institutes, community colleges, scholarship groups, and labor union-affiliated nonprofits. The goal of this legislation is to encourage investment in organizations and programs that are preparing individuals for good-paying, family-sustaining jobs. To learn more about my legislation, click [here](#). Rest assured, as the 118th Congress moves forward I will continue advocating for American workers to ensure that our legislation supports them as they enter the workforce.

As always, if you have any thoughts on these or other issues that are critical to your family, please do not hesitate to reach out. You can call (717) 393-0667 or send an email by visiting smucker.house.gov/contact. You can connect on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) by searching Congressman Smucker and sign up for the [e-Newsletter](#) for the latest updates. It is an honor and privilege to serve you in Congress.

Sincerely,



Lloyd Smucker
Member of Congress

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