



The Gateway to Careers Act

Recognizing the importance of work and the need for post-secondary education to fill many of our nation's job openings, the Gateway to Careers Act addresses the challenges nontraditional students face while pursuing postsecondary education and makes education more accessible to more students. Senator Maggie Hassan (D-New Hampshire) introduced the **Gateway to Careers Act**, and it was co-sponsored by Todd Young (R-Indiana), Tim Kaine (D-Virginia), and Cory Gardner (R-Colorado) on April 10, 2019.

The Challenge

About 80 percent of today's jobs require post-secondary education. Middle-skill jobs are defined as jobs that require more education than a high school diploma but less than a four-year college degree. Middle-skill jobs currently represent about 50 percent of the available jobs in the U.S. workforce. By 2024, middle skill jobs are expected to continue to represent the largest percentage (48 percent) of job openings. Unemployment rates in many states are at record lows, and more middle-skill jobs exist than middle-skilled workers to fill them.

It is essential that both U.S. born and immigrant students complete the education they need to fill the growing skills gap. The community college completion rate for full time students is 57 percent, and even less, 39 percent, for all full and part time students.

Today, U.S. undergraduate students are more diverse than in the past. They are older, more racially and ethnically diverse, more likely to work, and more likely to be parents. As their profile changes, today's undergraduate student cohort faces new challenges and barriers to entering and completing post-secondary education.

The Solution

The Gateway to Careers Act would create a competitive grant program administered by the Department of Education (ED). ED would provide career pathway grants to eligible institutions, primarily certain public institutions of higher education, career and technical schools, and create partnerships among educational institutions or agencies, community-based organizations, workforce development partners, and business associations.

The grants would cover support services and activities identified by institutions as most beneficial to their students' academic success. Some of the support services these grants could cover are childcare, transportation support, substance abuse treatment, professional development for faculty and staff, and career-pathway navigation services.

The Role of Immigrants

Since nearly 25 percent of all community college students are immigrants, the Gateway to Careers Act would serve a large number of immigrants. It has the potential to move individuals and families out of entry-level positions and into careers that are economically self-sustaining.

The Gateway to Careers Act would benefit immigrants in reaching their full potential, help address businesses' demand for workers, and contribute to the success of the U.S. economy.