

AFL-CIO

LEGISLATIVE ALERT

February 4, 2021

Dear Representative:

The AFL-CIO urges you to support the National Apprenticeship Act of 2021 (H.R. 447), scheduled for floor consideration this week. H.R. 447 recognizes that Registered Apprenticeship programs are the ‘gold standard’ in our nation’s workforce development system, and we welcome this effort to modernize a law that has not been meaningfully updated since it was enacted 83 years ago.

Unions and our signatory employers have a long history of establishing joint labor-management partnerships to design and implement Registered Apprenticeship programs, so we have a deep interest in maintaining and strengthening our nation’s Registered Apprenticeship system. These programs provide good jobs with good wages and benefits that increase as apprentices build their skills. They provide a valuable credential that can help secure future employment and advancement along a rewarding career path, and the opportunities they provide are particularly important for women, people of color and veterans.

H.R. 447 authorizes significant new funding to expand registered apprenticeships, pre-apprenticeships, and youth apprenticeships in the United States. It would codify and streamline existing standards that are vital to support apprentices, and would, for the first time, include youth apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs. The House Education and Labor Committee estimates that H.R. 447 will create over 1 million Registered Apprenticeship opportunities over the next 5 years.

H.R. 447 would also codify the role of the Office of Apprenticeship at the Department of Labor, and provide funding streams to ensure oversight and technical assistance. Importantly, it would expand Registered Apprenticeship opportunities into new sectors of the workforce. The bill also establishes standards for state apprenticeship agencies, including a requirement that they develop a state plan to support Registered Apprenticeships and provide technical assistance. Finally, the bill strengthens the National Advisory Committee on Apprenticeship, ensuring that experts from industry and labor have a role in improving the program.

Registered Apprenticeships are America’s most successful federally authorized workforce development program, employing 94 percent of those who complete a program. H.R. 447 will help ensure that these programs meet the highest possible quality standards and support family sustaining jobs.

We urge you to support H.R. 447 and to oppose any amendments that would weaken the bill approved for consideration by the full House.

Sincerely,



William Samuel, Director
Government Affairs

American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations

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