



Workforce and Skills Legislation at the Capitol

The following bills in the 2015 Colorado General Assembly focus on some aspect of skills training for Colorado workers.

SUPPORT

Senate Bill 15 -171 – Sunset Private Occupational Education Act- Senator Hill (R) and Representative Moreno (D). Renews the Division of Private Occupational Schools and implements recommendations from the sunset review process. *Signed into law.*

House Bill 15-1170: Representatives Kraft-Tharp (D) and Wilson (R) and Senators Hill (R) and Heath (D) **Increasing Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness** by adding a measure to indicators of the percentage of high school graduates who enroll in a career and technical education program, community college or 4 year institution immediately upon enrollment, with each option given equal weight in calculating school performance. Creates a position in the Department of Labor State Workforce Development Council to coordinate with schools and the Department of Education. *Signed into law.*

House Bill 15-1231 Representative Esgar (D) & Kraft-Tharp (D) Reinstates **enhanced unemployment compensation benefits** for unemployed workers who retrain for an in demand job. *KILLED in Senate State Affairs.*

House Bill 15-1274 Representatives Garnett (D) and Melton (D) and Senators Kerr (D) and Woods (R). Directs the state Workforce Development Council to create **three new career pathways** (one per year) in the fields of construction, information technology and health care. Includes mention of adults and adult education. *Signed into law.*

House Bill 15-1275 Representative Winter (D) and Senators Heath (D) and Marble (R). Clarifies that **apprenticeship programs and internship programs are available for concurrent enrollment.** Create a tuition assistance program for Pell eligible students for career and technical education certificate programs which do not meet Pell grant's minimum credit hour requirement (i.e. are too short to be Pell eligible, but are the certification employers value. *Signed into law.*

MONITOR

Senate Bill 15-082: Senator Marble (R) & Hodge (D) Also Representatives Moreno (D) & Lawrence (R)- **County Workforce Development Property Tax Incentives-** Allows County to set up a fund to provide scholarships for postsecondary education and training. Funding is gifts, grants and donations. County may offer a property tax credit to donors. County Commissioners must approve the total amount of the program and property tax credits granted. *Signed into law.*

Senate Bill 15-138: Senator Donovan (D) & Wilson (R) The ASCENT program, or concurrent enrollment, allows a student to enroll an extra year in high school and concurrently enroll in higher education. The bill clarifies that a school district may spend the **ASCENT program funding** on behalf of participating students in the applicable budget year. The district may also reserve ASCENT funding for students who are admitted to an institution of higher education by the end of the applicable budget year, but enroll and participate as an ASCENT student in the following budget year. *Signed into Law.*

House Bill 15-1188: Representative Ryden (D) and Primavera (D) and Senator T Neville (R) Implements recommendations from **Audit of Vocational Rehabilitation and Services**. *Signed into law.*

House Bill 15-1230 Representatives Lee (D) & Foote (D) and Senators Heath (D) and Cooke (R). Pays one-half of qualifying **internships in an innovative industry**. Interns are high school or college student or recent graduates. Administered by State Workforce Development Council. *Signed into law.*

House Bill 15-1270 Representatives Duran (D) and Foote (D) and Senators Todd (D) and Woods (R). Authorizes creation of some **technical high schools/early college**-grades 9-14. Funding at same level as ASCENT program. *Signed into law.*

House Bill 15-1271 Representatives Lontine (D) and Hamner (D) and Senators Marble (R) and Donovan (D). Allows funds from existing industry training to fund **mobile learning labs** to provide onsite training to upgrade skills of current employees. *Signed into law.*

House Bill 15-1276 Representative Pabon (D) and Williams (D) and Senators Cooke (R) and Heath (D). Creates a 3 year-\$10 million Department of Labor matching **grant program** for organizations to train skilled workers (less than a bachelor's). Organizations must actively recruit throughout the state. *Signed into law.*

KILLED

Senate Bill 15-062: Senator Kerr (D) & Representative Petersen (D) **Extend Restriction Tuition Increases Higher Education**. Extended a 6% cap on annual tuition increased with certain exceptions. *Killed in Senate Education*

Senate Bill 15-068: Senator Jones (D) & Representative Moreno (D) **Higher Education Lower Debt Act** Caps interest on nongovernmental student loans at the rate of federal student loans plus 2%. Creates a state income tax deduction for student loan payments. *Killed in Senate State Affairs.*

Senate Bill 15-072:Metropolitan State University of Denver Admission-Senator Lambert and Representative Lundeen- Changes Metro State University from a "modified open" school requiring only that students over 20 have a high school diploma or credential to a "moderately selective" university. *Killed in Senate Education*

Senate Bill 15-118:Senator Merrifield (D) **Modify Qualified State Tuition Program Tax Deductions** Increases the amount of the deduction middle income taxpayers can deduct from their income for contribution to College invest 529 plans. Eliminates deduction for those who earn more than \$250,000. No provision for those whose income is too low to owe state income tax. *Killed in Senate Finance*

House Bill 15-1001: Representative Petterson (D) and Garnett (D) and Senator Todd (D)- Restructure an existing **child care scholarship program**. Recipients would be those working on a post secondary credential in early childhood education. Applies to college, university or junior college to help people get and AA, BA or certification for employment as an early childhood teachers or program director. *Killed in Senate Education*

House Bill 15- 1190: Representative Windholtz (R) **Requires the State Workforce Development Council** in the Department of Labor to coordinate with the Department of Education identify needs, and resources and develop internships and opportunities for youth. *Killed in House State Affairs Committee.*

House Bill 15-1053: Representative Ransom (R) Currently **compulsory education** applies to children between 6 and 17 years old. This would change that to between 7 and 16 years old. *Killed in House Education Committee.*

House Bill 15- 1190: Representative Windholtz (R) **Requires the State Workforce Development Council** in the Department of Labor to coordinate with the Department of Education identify needs, and resources and develop internships and opportunities for youth. *Killed in House State Affairs Committee.*

House Bill 15-1227: Representative K Becker (D) and Senator Heath (D) Creates an income **tax credit for businesses who hire new employees for payments on their student loan**. Applies to associates, bachelors in STEM or vocational certificate in industry, manufacturing, or IT. Employee must earn less than \$60,000/yr. *Killed in House Appropriations*

House Bill 15-1382 Representative Duran (D) and Delgrosso (R). Aligns Colorado law with requirements of the new federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act regarding membership on Workforce Investment Boards. *Killed in Senate Business.*

Copies of the full bills are available at www.leg.state.co.us. For more information, contact Chaer Robert, Skills2Compete Colorado Coordinator 303-573-5669 x307 or crobert@cclponline.org