

Support Women's Access to High-Demand, High-Wage Jobs!
Co-sponsor the
Women & Workforce Investment for Nontraditional Jobs (Women WIN Jobs) Act

Supported by:

Association for Career and Technical Education, Business and Professional Women's Foundation, Center for Community Change, Center for Law and Social Policy, Coalition on Human Needs, National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity, National Association of State Directors of Career Technical Education Consortium, National Center for Women and Information Technology, National Employment Law Project, National Women's Law Center, Siemens, Tradeswomen Now and Tomorrow, Wider Opportunities for Women.

Dear Colleague:

Today women represent nearly half of our nation's workforce, but two-thirds of working women are concentrated in only 21 of 500 occupational categories. Except for nursing and teaching, most of these are among the very lowest paying retail, service and clerical job categories. Nontraditional jobs - those in which women comprise 25% or less of employees - pay 20 to 30 percent more than traditionally female jobs (except nursing and teaching), but only 7.3% of women are employed in these occupations. For example, electricians, one of the occupations expected to grow in the new green economy, have average annual earnings of \$50,645, but only 1% of the workforce is female. At the same time, and despite the struggling economy, employers in several industries are facing severe shortages of skilled workers to fill the fastest-growing and highest-paying jobs of the future – from information technology and the building trades, to renewable energy and energy efficiency.

The reasons that women are underrepresented in these fields include the lack of information about career opportunities and pathways, barriers to postsecondary access, lack of essential employment skills, discrimination, and insufficient supports and resources for child care, transportation and other work-related needs. Preparation for work in nontraditional fields is a major pathway out of poverty for women, but the only federal grant program specifically designed to train women for nontraditional occupations is the Women in Apprenticeship and Nontraditional Occupations (WANTO), which is 17 years old, funded at only \$1 million, and focused entirely on construction. Unless we invest in the recruiting and training of women in nontraditional fields, this trend will continue even as economic recovery and clean energy policies increase the number of high-demand, high-wage jobs in construction, technology and other critical sectors of the economy.

That is why we will soon introduce the Women & Workforce Investment for Nontraditional Jobs (Women WIN Jobs) Act that will invest in a new federal grant program to help recruit, prepare, place and retain women in high-demand, high-wage nontraditional jobs. Specifically, Women WIN Jobs:

- Improves and expands WANTO by broadening the scope beyond building trades to include any high-demand, high-wage nontraditional occupation and providing funding for innovative partnerships in each and every state.

- Authorizes up to \$100 million for recruiting, training, placing and retaining women in occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency.
- Requires eligible partnerships to include a community-based organization experienced in serving women, employers or a business association, a public postsecondary education institution, and a registered apprenticeship if available.
- Gives priority to partnerships that leverage other public or private funds.
- Targets women with family incomes below the local self-sufficiency standard, when available, or women in families with income of less than 200 percent of the poverty threshold.
- Requires grantees to conduct public education and outreach, provide career guidance and counseling, conduct individual assessments, assist participants to access postsecondary and apprenticeship programs, coordinate with high schools to improve the transition of participants into postsecondary opportunities, provide access to support services, develop employer incentives, develop and collect performance data, and establish benchmarks, among other activities.
- Establishes a bipartisan National Commission on the Status of Women in High-demand, High-skill Nontraditional Occupations.
- Creates a national clearinghouse to disseminate best practices and provide legal and technical assistance and requires a rigorous national evaluation of the program.

Please join us in ensuring a diverse and highly skilled workforce for the jobs of tomorrow. To co-sponsor this legislation or if you have any questions please contact Spiros Protopsaltis at Spiros.Protopsaltis@mail.house.gov or 5-2161 (Rep. Polis' office), Leticia Mederos at Leticia.Mederos@mail.house.gov or 5-3661 (Rep. DeLauro's office), or Dave Cohen at dcohen@mail.house.gov or 5-5076 (Rep. Tonko's office).

Sincerely,

Jared Polis
Member of Congress

Rosa DeLauro
Member of Congress

Paul Tonko
Member of Congress