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H.R. 4830 -- The Women & Workforce Investment for Non-traditional (Women WIN) Jobs Act

Background

- Today women represent half of our nation's workforce, but two-thirds of working women are concentrated in only 25 of 504 occupational categories, most of which are among the lowest paid occupations, except for teaching and nursing.
- Nontraditional jobs—those in which women comprise 25% or less of employees—pay 20 %-30% more than traditionally female jobs, but only 6.2% of women are employed in these occupations.
- For example, women make up 75.5% of cashiers, whose hourly wage averages \$9.08, but only 1% of electricians (one of the occupations expected to grow in the new green economy), who make an average of \$23.98 per hour.
- 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.
- For example, 90% of manufacturers are experiencing a shortage of qualified employees including machinists, operators, craft workers, distributors, and technicians. Women hold only 4.7% of welding, soldering, and brazing jobs.
- The reasons that women are underrepresented in these fields include lack of information about career opportunities and pathways, barriers to postsecondary education and training, lack of basic skills, workplace inequities, 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 17-year-old Women in Apprenticeship and Nontraditional Occupations (WANTO) grant program, funded at only \$1 million.

What the Women WIN Jobs Act does:

- Creates a new federal grant program to help recruit, prepare, place and retain women in high-demand, high-wage nontraditional jobs. Specifically:
 - Authorizes up to \$100 million for recruiting, training, placing and retaining women in occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency through innovative partnerships in each and every state.
 - Distributes funds to states based on their respective share of low-income women upon approval by the Secretary of Labor of a state plan describing the implementation of statewide activities and how the funds will be distributed to eligible partnerships.
 - 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 and also targets services to low-income women.

- 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, collect and report 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, charged with holding hearings and recommending additional policies to raise women's workforce participation in nontraditional occupations.
- Creates a national clearinghouse to disseminate best practices and provide legal and technical assistance to promote the employment and retention of women in nontraditional occupations, as well as for a rigorous national evaluation.

Supporting Organizations

9to5, National Association of Working Women
 Association for Career and Technical Education
 Business and Professional Women's Foundation
 Center for Community Change
 Center for Law and Social Policy
 Coalition of Labor Union Women
 Coalition on Human Needs
 Gamaliel Foundation
 Legal Momentum
 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 Partnership for Women & Families
 National Women's Law Center
 Siemens
 Tradeswomen Now and Tomorrow
 Transportation Equity Network
 Wider Opportunities for Women

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