

## **Think Tank/Advocacy**

“The 21st Century SKILLS Act would empower more workers to access and succeed in training for jobs that are the backbone of the US economy. Nearly 80% of small and mid-size business leaders support new, public investments in skills - investments like those proposed today by Senator Harris.”

**- Katie Spiker, Director of Government Affairs at National Skills Coalition**

“We applaud Senator Harris for introducing the 21<sup>st</sup> Century SKILLS Act. This legislation delivers a bold strategy for investing in America’s workforce. It would guarantee individual training accounts—currently available in very small numbers due to limited funding for the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)—for all qualifying low-income, adult, and dislocated workers. They can use the accounts to cover tuition and fees for high-quality education and training, along with much-needed supports including child care, transportation, and other services that help them succeed. This investment would be a crucial step towards making the public workforce development system truly work for America and support career pathways that help low-income people move along pathways out of poverty.”

**-Olivia Golden, executive director of the Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP).**

"The NAACP extends its gratitude to Senator Kamala Harris for her leadership in introducing the 21st Century SKILLS Act to ensure that every American has an opportunity to develop the knowledge base and skills to compete for the jobs of the future. By equipping American workers with the education, training, and resources necessary for the 21st century economy, this bill will help foster inclusive and equity-oriented economic growth. When we invest in our communities, we ensure that all Americans have a chance to contribute to our nation and succeed."

**- Hilary O. Shelton, Director of NAACP’s Washington Bureau & Senior Vice President for Policy and Advocacy**

“We are already seeing the impact changing talent requirements are having in the skills gap experienced by U.S. employers. The truth is, the United States already has untapped talent that can play a significant role in filling these and future jobs, if provided with the right education, skills, and supports. The 21st Century SKILLS Act is designed to provide these Americans with the skills necessary to be successful in the workforce and keep up with our changing economic demands. Jobs for the Future is excited to support this important legislation.”

**- Mary Clagett, Senior Director of Workforce Policy at Jobs for the Future**

“Workers face an increasingly hostile labor market—wages remain stubbornly low, and education and training has become a prerequisite for more jobs while also becoming increasingly unaffordable. The 21st Century SKILLS Act would make important investments in workers and labor-management partnerships, which would help address the barriers workers face to accessing affordable education and training, building power, and securing a good job.”

**- Angela Hanks, Deputy Executive Director of the Groundwork Collaborative at the Hub Project**

“As technology continues to reshape the economy, and as automation holds the potential to displace as much as a third of the workforce by 2030, many workers are in danger of being left behind. Providing better access to training and career counseling through skills accounts will give workers the opportunity to transition and succeed, create a more productive and globally-competitive workforce, and could reduce fiscal pressures on the social safety net.”

**- Alastair Fitzpayne, Executive Director of the Aspen Institute’s Future of Work Initiative**

“It is commendable that Sen. Harris has introduced this bill to increase economic mobility by improving workers’ ability to develop and deploy their skills. The bill gives workers more freedom to take risks in the labor market by getting training in a new field. Research shows that high-quality training programs like registered apprenticeships and labor-management training programs can increase workers’ earnings potential. Most importantly, Upskill Accounts acknowledge the realities of many family situations by making funding available for wraparound services such as childcare or transportation. This addresses research showing that workers face practical barriers to improving their economic situation.”

**- Kate Bahn, director of Labor Market Policy and economist at the Washington Center for Equitable Growth.**

### **Education**

“With more than 8 million working-age adults in California who lack a postsecondary credential valued in the labor market, greater investment is needed in ensuring all communities can equitably and affordably access the knowledge and skills needed to compete in our economy. I appreciate efforts by Senator Harris to call attention to the critical need for greater investment in incumbent workers struggling in communities across our nation. In California, our efforts have focused on stimulating innovative and responsive approaches that are paired with meaningful accountability standards to ensure workforce programs make good on the promise of greater economic mobility through significant wage increases and attainment of regional living wages. Focused attention on programs that provide in-demand skills, reliable quality assurance that signals the value of credentials in the labor market, and solutions designed around the needs of working learners over the course of their careers is also what our country needs to grow our economy now and in the future.”

**- Chancellor Eloy Oakley, California Community Colleges**

### **Small Business**

"As a social enterprise, With Love Market & Cafe succeeds when our employees and communities succeed. We take pride in being a stepping stone for those seeking employment and recognize the importance of equipping our employees, 75 percent of whom are local hires in South Los Angeles, with the tools they need to find a long-term career. This bill would do just that. A program like this would ensure that people across the country have the opportunity to utilize an Upskill Account to gain the skills they need to seek a promotion or a higher paying job,

which ultimately will benefit small employers and improve the health and wealth of minority communities."

- **Andrew McDowell, owner of With Love Market & Cafe in Los Angeles**

"As a small business owner, I'm always looking for ways to broaden our pipeline of trained employees and create economic opportunity for underserved communities. We founded "The Career Excellence Academy" in partnership with the Los Angeles Trade Tech College to help students access professional development and improve their workforce skills. This is why I'm excited about the 21st Century SKILLS Act. This legislation will help break down barriers so more people can access education and workforce training. When individuals have access to educational opportunities, they can learn and hone-in their skills to be an even greater asset to their employer."

- **LaShondra Mercurius, President of JLM Strategic Talent Partners in Long Beach**

### **Trade Group**

"Thank you Senator Harris for introducing this legislation. The world of work is changing and industry and government both have a role to play to help current workers keep pace. The 21st Century SKILLS Act is an important step in making sure we have a well-trained workforce that can succeed in our growing digital economy."

- **Leticia Lewis, Policy Director, BSA | The Software Alliance**