118TH CONGRESS 2D SESSION	S.	
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To establish, improve, or expand high-quality workforce development programs at community colleges, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. Warnock (for himself and Mr. Braun) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on

A BILL

To establish, improve, or expand high-quality workforce development programs at community colleges, and for other purposes.

- 1 Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-
- 2 tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,
- 3 SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.
- 4 This Act may be cited as the "Pathways to Prosperity
- 5 Act".
- 6 SEC. 2. STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY COLLEGES GRANT
- 7 **PROGRAM.**
- 8 Subtitle D of title I of the Workforce Innovation and
- 9 Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C. 3221 et seq.) is amended—

1	(1) by redesignating section 172 as section 173;
2	and
3	(2) by inserting after section 171 the following:
4	"SEC. 172. STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY COLLEGES WORK-
5	FORCE DEVELOPMENT GRANTS PROGRAM.
6	"(a) Purposes.—The purposes of this section are—
7	"(1) to establish, improve, or expand high-qual-
8	ity workforce development programs at community
9	colleges;
10	"(2) to expand opportunities for individuals to
11	obtain recognized postsecondary credentials that are
12	nationally or regionally portable and stackable for
13	in-demand industry sectors or occupations;
14	"(3) to better align high-quality workforce de-
15	velopment programs at community colleges with
16	local industry needs and in-demand industry sectors
17	or occupations; and
18	"(4) to strengthen partnerships between em-
19	ployers in in-demand industry sectors or occupations
20	and community colleges for the purpose of ensuring
21	high-quality workforce development curriculums.
22	"(b) Strengthening Community Colleges
23	Workforce Development Grants Program.—
24	"(1) In general.—From the amounts appro-
25	priated to carry out this section under section

1 173(e) and not reserved under paragraph (2), the 2 Secretary shall, on a competitive basis, award grants 3 to eligible institutions, to work with eligible partner-4 ships to carry out the activities described in sub-5 section (e). 6 "(2) Reservation.—Of the amounts appro-7 priated to carry out this section under section 8 173(e), the Secretary may reserve not more than 2 9 percent for the administration of grants awarded 10 under this section, including— "(A) providing technical assistance and 11 12 targeted outreach to support eligible institu-13 tions serving a high number or high percentage 14 of low-income individuals or individuals with 15 barriers to employment, and rural-serving eligi-16 ble institutions, to provide guidance and assist-17 ance in the process of applying for grants under 18 this section; and 19 "(B) evaluating and reporting on the per-20 formance and impact of programs funded under 21 this section in accordance with subsections (f) 22 through (h). "(c) AWARD PERIOD.— 23

1	(1) INITIAL GRANT PERIOD.—Each grant
2	awarded under this section shall be awarded for an
3	initial period of not more than 4 years.
4	"(2) Subsequent grants.—An eligible insti-
5	tution that receives an initial grant under this sec-
6	tion may receive one or more additional grants
7	under this section, for additional periods of not more
8	than 4 years each, if the eligible institution dem-
9	onstrates that, during the most recently completed
10	grant period for a grant received under this section
11	the institution's eligible partnership achieved the lev-
12	els of performance established under subsection (f)
13	with respect to the indicators of performance speci-
14	fied in subsection (f).
15	"(d) Application.—
16	"(1) In general.—To be eligible to receive a
17	grant under this section, an eligible institution shall
18	submit an application to the Secretary at such time
19	and in such manner as the Secretary may require
20	"(2) Contents.—An application submitted by
21	an eligible institution under paragraph (1) shall in-
22	clude a description of each the following:
23	"(A) The extent to which the eligible insti-
24	tution has demonstrated success building part-
25	nerships with local employers in in-demand in-

1	dustry sectors or occupations to carry out ac-
2	tivities to provide students with the skills need-
3	ed for such occupations or occupations in such
4	industry sectors and an explanation of the re-
5	sults of any such partnership activities.
6	"(B) The methods and strategies the eligi-
7	ble institution will use to engage with employers
8	in in-demand industry sectors or occupations,
9	including any arrangements the institution will
10	make to place individuals who complete the
11	workforce development program supported by
12	the grant into employment with such employers.
13	"(C) The proposed eligible partnership
14	that the eligible institution will establish and
15	maintain to comply with subsection (e)(1) (re-
16	ferred to in this section as an 'eligible partner-
17	ship', including—
18	"(i) the roles and responsibilities (in-
19	cluding serving as a provider), determined
20	by the eligible institution, of each em-
21	ployer, organization, agency, or institution
22	of higher education that the eligible insti-
23	tution will partner with to carry out the
24	activities under this section; and

1	(11) the needs that will be addressed
2	by such eligible partnership.
3	"(D) One or more industry sectors or oc-
4	cupations that such partnership will target and
5	real-time labor market data demonstrating that
6	those sectors or occupations are aligned with
7	employer demand in the geographic area to be
8	served by the eligible institution.
9	"(E) Information that consists of—
10	"(i) a description of the extent to
11	which the eligible institution will leverage
12	additional resources to support the pro-
13	gram to be funded with the grant, and an
14	assurance that the eligible institution will
15	obtain a written commitment for any lever-
16	aged funds (such as matching funds) for
17	the program;
18	"(ii) information demonstrating the
19	future sustainability of such program; and
20	"(iii) a description of any investments
21	or matching funds provided by employers
22	participating in the eligible partnerships.
23	"(F) The steps the institution will take to
24	ensure the high quality of the program to be

1	funded with the grant, including the career
2	pathways within such program.
3	"(G) The population and geographic area
4	to be served by the eligible institution, including
5	the number of individuals the eligible institution
6	intends to serve during the grant period.
7	"(H) The workforce development program
8	to be supported by the grant.
9	"(I) The recognized postsecondary creden-
10	tial that is expected to be earned by partici-
11	pants in such workforce development program
12	and the related in-demand industry sector or
13	occupation for which such program will prepare
14	participants.
15	"(J) The evidence upon which the edu-
16	cation and skills development strategies to be
17	used in such workforce development program
18	are based and an explanation of how such evi-
19	dence influenced the design of the program to
20	improve education and employment outcomes.
21	"(K) How activities of the eligible institu-
22	tion and its eligible partnership carried out
23	through the program are expected to align with
24	the workforce strategies identified in—

1	(1) any State plan or local plan sub-
2	mitted under this Act by the State, out-
3	lying area, or locality in which the eligible
4	institution is expected to operate;
5	"(ii) any State plan submitted under
6	section 122 of the Carl D. Perkins Career
7	and Technical Education Act of 2006 (20
8	U.S.C. 2342) by such State or outlying
9	area; and
10	"(iii) any economic development plan
11	of the chief executive of such State or out-
12	lying area.
13	"(L) The expected measures of the eligible
14	institution, for the eligible partnership, with re-
15	spect to—
16	"(i) a capacity building indicator (as
17	described in subsection $(f)(1)(B)$; and
18	"(ii) the expected levels of perform-
19	ance of individuals participating in the pro-
20	gram to be offered by the eligible institu-
21	tion, with respect to any indicators of per-
22	formance applicable under subsection (f).
23	"(M) In the case of an eligible institution
24	proposing a workforce development program
25	that leads to a recognized postsecondary cre-

1	dential described in subsection $(e)(2)(C)(1)$, the
2	information described in subclauses (I) through
3	(VI) of subsection (e)(2)(C)(i).
4	"(N) How the eligible institution will keep
5	tuition and other costs of attendance (as de-
6	scribed in subsection (e)(3)(D)) low or afford-
7	able for students who are participants.
8	"(O) How the eligible institution will work
9	with employers and industry partners in an eli-
10	gible partnership to design curricula and train-
11	ing programs aligned to industry needs for the
12	workforce development programs.
13	"(3) Consideration of previous experi-
14	ENCE.—The Secretary may not disqualify an eligible
15	institution from receiving a grant under this section
16	solely because such institution lacks previous experi-
17	ence in building partnerships, as described in para-
18	graph $(2)(A)$.
19	"(4) Priority.—In awarding grants under this
20	section, the Secretary shall give priority to eligible
21	institutions that—
22	"(A) will use such a grant to serve—
23	"(i) individuals with barriers to em-
24	ployment; or

1	"(ii) incumbent workers who need to
2	gain or improve foundational skills to en-
3	hance their employability;
4	"(B) use competency-based assessments
5	such as the covered assessment identified by the
6	State in which the eligible institution is located
7	to award academic credit for prior learning for
8	the program supported by the grant; or
9	"(C) have, or will seek to have, the pro-
10	vider of the career education program within
11	the program supported by the grant included or
12	the list of eligible providers of training services
13	under section 122(d) for the State in which the
14	eligible institution is located.
15	"(e) Uses of Funds.—
16	"(1) Eligible Partnership.—For the pur-
17	pose of carrying out the activities specified in para-
18	graphs (2) and (3), an eligible institution that re-
19	ceives a grant under this section shall establish a
20	partnership (including continuing an existing part
21	nership) that shall include one or more employers in
22	an in-demand industry sector or occupation and may
23	include other organizations, agencies, or institutions
24	of higher education. The eligible institution shall
25	maintain such eligible partnership for the duration

1	of the grant period. The eligible institution shall en-
2	sure that the partnership, in carrying out its roles
3	and responsibilities under subsection $(d)(2)(C)$ for
4	the program under the grant—
5	"(A) targets one or more specific in-de-
6	mand industry sectors or occupations;
7	"(B) carries out activities that include col-
8	laboration with the workforce development sys-
9	tem;
10	"(C) serves adult and dislocated workers
11	incumbent workers, and new entrants to the
12	workforce;
13	"(D) uses an evidence-based program de-
14	sign that is appropriate for the activities carried
15	out by the partnership;
16	"(E) incorporates work-based learning op-
17	portunities, as defined in section 3 of the Carl
18	D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act
19	of 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2302); and
20	"(F) incorporates, to the extent appro-
21	priate, virtual service delivery to facilitate tech-
22	nology-enabled learning.
23	"(2) Required activities.—An eligible insti-
24	tution that receives a grant under this section shall
25	use the grant funds, in consultation with the em-

1	ployers in the eligible partnership described in para-
2	graph (1), to—
3	"(A) establish, improve, or expand a high-
4	quality, evidence-based workforce development
5	program, such as a career pathway program, or
6	work-based learning program (including appren-
7	ticeship programs or pre-apprenticeships);
8	"(B) provide career services to individuals
9	participating in the program funded with the
10	grant to facilitate retention and program com-
11	pletion, which may include—
12	"(i) career navigation, coaching,
13	mentorship, and case management serv-
14	ices, including providing information and
15	outreach to individuals with barriers to
16	employment to encourage such individuals
17	to participate in the program funded with
18	the grant; and
19	"(ii) providing access to course mate-
20	rials, technological devices, required equip-
21	ment, and other supports necessary for
22	participation in and successful completion
23	of such program; and

1	"(C) make available, in a format that is
2	open, searchable, and easily comparable, infor-
3	mation on—
4	"(i) curricula and recognized postsec-
5	ondary credentials offered through the pro-
6	gram funded with the grant, including any
7	curricula or credentials created or further
8	developed using such grant, which for each
9	recognized postsecondary credential shall
10	include—
11	"(I) the issuing entity of such
12	credential;
13	"(II) any third-party endorse-
14	ment of such credential;
15	"(III) the occupations for which
16	the credential prepares individuals;
17	"(IV) the skills and competencies
18	necessary to achieve to earn such cre-
19	dential;
20	"(V) the level of mastery of such
21	skills and competencies (including how
22	mastery necessary to achieve to earn
23	such credential is assessed); and
24	"(VI) any transfer value or
25	stackability of the credential;

1	"(ii) any skills or competencies devel-
2	oped by individuals who participate in such
3	program beyond the skills and com-
4	petencies identified as necessary to earn
5	such credential; and
6	"(iii) related employment and earn-
7	ings outcomes on the primary indicators of
8	performance described in subclauses (I)
9	through (III) of section $116(b)(2)(A)(i)$.
10	"(3) Additional activities.—In addition to
11	the activities required under paragraph (2), an eligi-
12	ble institution that receives a grant under this sec-
13	tion shall use the grant funds, in consultation with
14	the employers in the eligible partnership described in
15	paragraph (1), carry out one or more of the fol-
16	lowing activities:
17	"(A) Establish, improve, or expand for the
18	workforce development program carried out
19	under the grant—
20	"(i) articulation agreements (as de-
21	fined in section 486A(a) of the Higher
22	Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C.
23	1093a(a)));
24	"(ii) credit transfer agreements;

1	"(111) a corequisite remediation pro-
2	gram that enables a student to receive re-
3	medial education services while enrolled in
4	a postsecondary course rather than requir-
5	ing the student to receive remedial edu-
6	cation before enrolling in a such a course;
7	"(iv) a dual or concurrent enrollment
8	program;
9	"(v) competency-based education and
10	assessment; or
11	"(vi) policies and processes to award
12	academic credit for prior learning or for a
13	program described in paragraph (2)(A).
14	"(B) Establish or implement plans for pro-
15	viders of the program described in paragraph
16	(2)(A) to meet the criteria and information re-
17	quirements and carry out the procedures nec-
18	essary to be included on the eligible training
19	services provider list described in section
20	122(d), to provide training services through the
21	program.
22	"(C) Purchase, lease, or refurbish special-
23	ized equipment as necessary to carry out such
24	program, except that not more than 15 percent
25	of the funds awarded to the eligible institution

1	under this section may be used for activities de-
2	scribed in this subparagraph.
3	"(D) Reduce or eliminate unmet financial
4	need relating to the cost of attendance (as de-
5	fined under section 472 of the Higher Edu-
6	cation Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1087ll)) of par-
7	ticipants in such program.
8	"(4) Administrative cost limit.—An eligible
9	institution may use not more than 7 percent of the
10	funds awarded to the institution under this section
11	for administrative costs, including costs related to
12	collecting information, analysis, and coordination for
13	purposes of subsection (f).
14	"(f) Performance Levels and Performance
15	Reviews.—
16	"(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall develop
17	and implement guidance that establishes the levels
18	of performance that are expected to be achieved by
19	the eligible partnership established or maintained by
20	the eligible institution under subsection $(e)(1)$ receiv-
21	ing a grant under this section. Such levels of per-
22	formance shall be established on the following indi-
23	cators of performance:
24	"(A) Each of the primary indicators of
25	performance for adults described in section

1	116(b), which shall be applied for all individuals
2	who participate in a program that receives
3	funding from a grant under this section.
4	"(B) An indicator for the extent to which
5	the eligible partnership built capacity by—
6	"(i) increasing the breadth and depth
7	of employer engagement and investment in
8	a workforce development program in the
9	in-demand industry sector or occupation
10	targeted by the eligible partnership;
11	"(ii) designing or implementing new
12	and accelerated instructional techniques or
13	technologies, including the use of advanced
14	online and technology-enabled learning
15	(such as learning through immersive tech-
16	nology); and
17	"(iii) increasing program and policy
18	alignment across systems and decreasing
19	duplicative services or service gaps.
20	"(C) Indicators, with respect to individuals
21	who participated in the workforce development
22	program funded with the grant, for—
23	"(i) the percentage of participants
24	who successfully completed the program;
25	and

1	"(ii) of the participants who were in-
2	cumbent workers at the time of enrollment
3	in the program, the percentage who ad-
4	vanced into higher-level positions during or
5	after completing the program.
6	"(2) Consultation and determination of
7	PERFORMANCE LEVELS.—
8	"(A) Consideration.—In developing lev-
9	els of performance for the indicators of per-
10	formance described in paragraph (1) in accord-
11	ance with paragraph (1), the Secretary shall
12	take into consideration the expected measures
13	of the eligible institution pursuant to subsection
14	(d)(2)(L).
15	"(B) Determination.—After completing
16	the consideration required under subparagraph
17	(A), the Secretary shall separately determine
18	the levels of performance that will apply to each
19	eligible partnership for the indicators, taking
20	into account—
21	"(i) the expected levels of performance
22	of the corresponding eligible institution
23	with respect to the expected measures de-
24	scribed by the eligible institution pursuant
25	to subsection $(d)(2)(L)$; and

1	"(ii) local economic conditions in the
2	geographic area to be served by the eligible
3	institution, including differences in unem-
4	ployment rates and job losses or gains in
5	particular industry sectors or occupations.
6	"(C) Notice and acknowledgment.—
7	"(i) Notice.—The Secretary shall
8	provide each eligible institution with a
9	written notification that sets forth the lev-
10	els of performance that will apply to the el-
11	igible partnership on the indicators as de-
12	termined under subparagraph (B).
13	"(ii) Acknowledgment.—After re-
14	ceiving the notification described in clause
15	(i), each eligible institution shall submit to
16	the Secretary written confirmation that the
17	eligible institution—
18	"(I) received the notification; and
19	"(II) agrees that the eligible
20	partnership shall be evaluated in ac-
21	cordance with the levels of perform-
22	ance determined by the Secretary.
23	"(3) Performance reviews.—On an annual
24	basis during each year of the grant period, the Sec-
25	retary shall evaluate the performance on the indica-

1	tors of performance during such year of the eligible
2	partnership of each eligible institution receiving a
3	grant under this section in a manner consistent with
4	the levels of performance determined for such part-
5	nership pursuant to paragraph (2).
6	"(4) Failure to meet performance lev-
7	ELS.—After conducting an evaluation under para-
8	graph (3), if the Secretary determines that an eligi-
9	ble partnership did not achieve the levels of perform-
10	ance applicable to the eligible partnership under
11	paragraph (2), the Secretary shall—
12	"(A) provide technical assistance to the eli-
13	gible partnership; and
14	"(B) develop a performance improvement
15	plan for the eligible partnership.
16	"(g) Evaluations and Reports.—
17	"(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 4 years
18	after the date on which the first grant is awarded
19	under this section, the Secretary shall design and
20	conduct an evaluation to determine the overall effec-
21	tiveness of the eligible partnerships of eligible insti-
22	tutions receiving grants under this section.
23	"(2) Elements.—The evaluation of the effec-
24	tiveness of eligible partnerships conducted under
25	paragraph (1) shall include an assessment of the

1	general effectiveness of programs and activities sup-
2	ported by the grants awarded to the corresponding
3	eligible institutions under this section, including the
4	extent to which the eligible partnerships, through
5	the programs and activities—
6	"(A) developed new, or expanded existing
7	successful industry sector or occupation strate-
8	gies, including the extent to which such eligible
9	partnerships deepened employer engagement in
10	workforce development programs, and developed
11	such programs that met industry skill needs;
12	"(B) created, expanded, or enhanced ca-
13	reer pathways, including the extent to which the
14	eligible partnerships developed or improved pro-
15	vision of competency-based assessment and edu-
16	cation, credit for prior learning, modularized
17	and self-paced curricula, integrated education
18	and workforce development, dual enrollment in
19	secondary and postsecondary career pathways
20	stacked and latticed credentials, and online and
21	distance learning;
22	"(C) created alignment between eligible in-
23	stitutions and the workforce development sys-
24	tem;

1	"(D) assisted individuals with finding, re-
2	taining, or advancing in employment;
3	"(E) assisted individuals with earning rec-
4	ognized postsecondary credentials; and
5	"(F) provided equal access to various de-
6	mographic groups, including people of different
7	geographic locations, ages, races, national ori-
8	gins, and sexes.
9	"(3) Design requirements.—The evaluation
10	under this subsection shall—
11	"(A) be designed by the Secretary (acting
12	through the Chief Evaluation Officer) in con-
13	junction with the eligible partnerships being
14	evaluated;
15	"(B) include analysis of program partici-
16	pant feedback and include outcome and process
17	measures; and
18	"(C) use designs that employ the most rig-
19	orous analytical and statistical methods that
20	are reasonably feasible, such as the use of con-
21	trol groups.
22	"(4) Data accessibility.—The Secretary
23	shall make available on a publicly accessible website
24	of the Department of Labor data collected as part
25	of the evaluation under this subsection. Such data

1	shall be made available in an aggregated format that
2	does not reveal personally identifiable information
3	and that ensures compliance with relevant Federal
4	laws, including section 444 of the General Education
5	Provisions Act (20 U.S.C. 1232g), which shall be
6	applied as if the programs described in this section
7	are applicable programs under that section.
8	"(5) Publication and reporting of eval-
9	UATION FINDINGS.—The Secretary (acting through
10	the Chief Evaluation Officer) shall—
11	"(A) in accordance with the timeline deter-
12	mined to be appropriate by the Chief Evalua-
13	tion Officer, publish an interim report on the
14	preliminary results of the evaluation conducted
15	under this subsection;
16	"(B) not later than 60 days after the date
17	on which the evaluation is completed under this
18	subsection, submit to the Committee on Edu-
19	cation and the Workforce of the House of Rep-
20	resentatives and the Committee on Health,
21	Education, Labor, and Pensions of the Senate
22	a report on such evaluation; and
23	"(C) not later than 90 days after such
24	completion date, publish and make the results

1	of such evaluation available on a publicly acces-
2	sible website of the Department of Labor.
3	"(h) Annual Reports.—The Secretary shall make
4	available on a publicly accessible website of the Depart-
5	ment of Labor, in transparent, linked, open, and inter-
6	operable data formats, information on each of the fol-
7	lowing:
8	"(1) The performance of eligible partnerships
9	on the indicators of performance set forth under
10	subparagraphs (A), (B), and (C) of subsection
11	(f)(1).
12	"(2) The number of individuals enrolled in
13	workforce development programs funded with a
14	grant under this section.
15	"(i) Supplement Not Supplant.—Funds made
16	available to carry out this section shall be used to supple-
17	ment, and not supplant, other Federal, State, and local
18	public funds made available for carrying out the activities
19	described in this section.
20	"(j) Definitions.—In this section:
21	"(1) COMMUNITY COLLEGE.—The term 'com-
22	munity college' means—
23	"(A) a public institution of higher edu-
24	cation (as defined in section 101(a) of the

1	Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C.
2	1001(a))), at which—
3	"(i) the highest degree awarded is an
4	associate degree; or
5	"(ii) an associate degree is the most
6	frequently awarded degree;
7	"(B) a branch campus of a 4-year public
8	institution of higher education (as defined in
9	section 101 of the Higher Education Act of
10	1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001)), if, at such branch
11	campus—
12	"(i) the highest degree awarded is an
13	associate degree; or
14	"(ii) an associate degree is the most
15	frequently awarded degree;
16	"(C) a 2-year Tribal College or University
17	(as defined in section 316(b)(3) of the Higher
18	Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C.
19	1059e(b)(3)); or
20	"(D) a degree-granting Tribal College or
21	University (as defined in section 316(b)(3) of
22	the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C.
23	1059e(b)(3))) at which—
24	"(i) the highest degree awarded is an
25	associate degree; or

1	"(ii) an associate degree is the most
2	frequently awarded degree.
3	"(2) ELIGIBLE INSTITUTION.—The term 'eligi-
4	ble institution' means—
5	"(A) a community college;
6	"(B) a postsecondary vocational institution
7	(as defined in section 102(c) of the Higher
8	Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1002(e))); or
9	"(C) a consortium of such colleges or insti-
10	tutions.".
11	SEC. 3. TABLE OF CONTENTS.
12	The table of contents in section 1(b) of the Workforce
13	Innovation and Opportunity Act is amended by striking
14	the item relating to section 172 and inserting the fol-
15	lowing:
	"Sec. 172. Strengthening community colleges workforce development grants program. "Sec. 173. Authorization of appropriations.".