

116TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 2468

To require employers to provide training to employees whose jobs are in danger of being changed or replaced due to technology, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

SEPTEMBER 11, 2019

Mr. BROWN introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Finance

A BILL

To require employers to provide training to employees whose jobs are in danger of being changed or replaced due to technology, 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 “Workers’ Right to
5 Training Act”.

6 SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

7 In this Act:

8 (1) AFFECTED EMPLOYEE.—The term “af-
9 fected employee” means an employee who may rea-

1 sonably be expected to experience a change in em-
2 ployment position or an employment loss as a con-
3 sequence of the use of technology by the employer of
4 the employee.

5 (2) CHANGE IN EMPLOYMENT POSITION.—The
6 term “change in employment position” means a ma-
7 terial change—

8 (A) in pay or benefits, working conditions,
9 or schedule of an employee; or
10 (B) that results in an unreasonable com-
11 mute for the employee.

12 (3) COMMITTEE OF EMPLOYEES.—The term
13 “committee of employees” means a committee of
14 nonsupervisory, nonmanagerial employees of an em-
15 ployer.

16 (4) EMPLOYEE.—The term “employee” means
17 any individual who provides labor or services for re-
18 muneration by an employer, unless the employer
19 demonstrates that all of the following conditions are
20 satisfied:

21 (A) The individual is free from the control
22 and direction of the hiring entity in connection
23 with the performance of the work, both under
24 the contract for the performance of the work
25 and in fact.

(B) The individual performs work that is outside the usual course of the hiring entity's business.

(C) The individual is customarily engaged in an independently established trade, occupation, or business of the same nature as that involved in the work performed.

(5) EMPLOYER.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The term “employer” means any business enterprise, including the nominal employer and any entity that is a parent of, or is integrated with, the business enterprise, that—

(i) is engaged in interstate commerce or in the production of goods or services for interstate commerce; and

(ii) employs not less than 25 employees, including part-time employees.

(B) MULTIPLE EMPLOYERS.—Two or more business enterprises shall each be considered an employer with respect to an employee, if each such business enterprise codetermines or shares control over the employee's essential terms and conditions of employment. In determining

whether multiple business enterprises are employers of an employee—

(i) it shall be relevant to consider

whether each enterprise has—

(I) direct control and indirect

control over the terms and conditions

of the employee;

(II) reserved authority to control

such terms and conditions; and

(III) control over such terms and

conditions exercised by a person in

fact; and

(ii) the existence of indirect control or

reserved authority alone by a business en-

terprise may be sufficient to establish the

employer relationship, given specific facts

and circumstances.

(C) DEFINITIONS.—For the purposes of this paragraph:

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(6) EMPLOYMENT LOSS.—The term “employment loss” means—

(B) a reduction in hours of work of more than 50 percent during each month of any 6-month period.

(7) INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION.—The term “institution of higher education” has the meaning given the term in section 101 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001).

1 the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (29
2 U.S.C. 3102).

3 (9) REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP.—The term
4 “registered apprenticeship” means an apprenticeship
5 registered under the Act of August 16, 1937 (com-
6 monly known as the “National Apprenticeship Act”;
7 50 Stat. 664, chapter 663; 29 U.S.C. 50 et seq.).

8 (10) REPRESENTATIVE.—The term “represent-
9 ative” means an exclusive representative of employ-
10 ees within the meaning of section 9(a) or 8(f) of the
11 National Labor Relations Act (29 U.S.C. 159(a),
12 158(f)) or section 2 of the Railway Labor Act (45
13 U.S.C. 152).

14 (11) TECHNOLOGY.—

15 (A) IN GENERAL.—The term “technology”
16 means a computerized process used to create
17 value at a business enterprise, including auto-
18 mation, artificial intelligence, robotics, personal
19 computing, information technology, and e-com-
20 merce.

21 (B) REGULATIONS.—The Secretary of
22 Labor, in consultation with the Secretary of
23 Commerce, shall promulgate regulations further
24 defining the term “technology” for purposes of
25 this Act.

1 **SEC. 3. BARGAINING AND NOTICE REQUIRED BEFORE USE**
2 **OF EMPLOYMENT-CHANGING OR EMPLOY-**
3 **MENT-ELIMINATING TECHNOLOGY.**

4 (a) BARGAINING WITH EMPLOYEES BEFORE USE OF
5 EMPLOYMENT-CHANGING OR EMPLOYMENT-ELIMINATING
6 TECHNOLOGY.—

7 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days be-
8 fore providing any notices under subsection (b), an
9 employer that intends to use technology that will re-
10 sult in a change in employment position or an em-
11 ployment loss to any employees of the employer shall
12 engage in bargaining with such employees through
13 their chosen representative in order to ensure the
14 technology is procured and implemented in a way
15 that incorporates the skills and roles of the employ-
16 ees of the employer.

17 (2) CHOSEN REPRESENTATIVES.—An employer
18 shall carry out the bargaining required under para-
19 graph (1) with—

20 (A) in the case of affected employees who
21 are represented by a labor organization for pur-
22 poses of collective bargaining, a representative
23 from the labor organization; or

24 (B) in the case of affected employees who
25 are not represented by a labor organization for
26 purposes of collective bargaining, with a com-

1 mittee of employees who are elected by their
2 peers for purposes of the bargaining.

3 (3) MEDIATION UPON FAILURE TO AGREE.—

4 (A) REQUEST.—If an employer and the
5 chosen representative of employees are unable
6 to obtain an agreement under paragraph (1) by
7 180 days after the commencement of the bar-
8 gaining, the parties shall notify the Federal Me-
9 diation and Conciliation Service of the failure to
10 reach agreement and request mediation.

11 (B) ROLE OF SERVICE.—The Federal Me-
12 diation and Conciliation Service shall, upon re-
13 ceiving a request under subparagraph (A),
14 promptly communicate with the parties and
15 work to bring the parties to agreement through
16 mediation and conciliation.

17 (4) INTERACTION WITH NLRA.—A committee of
18 employees constituted for purposes of this subsection
19 shall not be found to constitute a labor organization,
20 as defined in section 2 of the National Labor Rela-
21 tions Act (29 U.S.C. 152).

22 (b) NOTICE TO EMPLOYEES FOR CHANGE IN EM-
23 PLOYMENT POSITIONS.—

24 (1) IN GENERAL.—An employer that intends to
25 use technology that will result in a change in em-

1 placement position for one or more employees of the
2 employer shall, not later than 180 days before any
3 such change in employment position, provide written
4 notice signed by the employer's authorized rep-
5 resentative—

6 (A) of the technology, including a descrip-
7 tion of the technology, and the impact of the
8 technology on employment positions, including
9 which employment positions will be impacted
10 and whether any new positions will be created;
11 and

12 (B) regarding the required training that
13 the employer will provide under section 4.

14 (2) PROVISION OF NOTICE.—The written notice
15 under paragraph (1) shall be—

16 (A) provided to each chosen representative
17 of the affected employees, as of the date of the
18 notice, and to each affected employee;

19 (B) distributed electronically if the em-
20 ployer customarily communicates with its em-
21 ployees through electronic communications; and

22 (C) posted publicly in conspicuous loca-
23 tions in the workplace, including all places
24 where notices to employees are commonly post-
25 ed by the employer.

1 (c) NOTICE TO EMPLOYEES SUBJECT TO AN EM-
2 PLOYMENT LOSS.—An employer that intends to use tech-
3 nology that will cause an employment loss for one or more
4 employees of the employer shall, not later than 270 days
5 before any such employment loss, provide and post written
6 notice that includes the information described in sub-
7 section (b)(1), in the same manner as described in sub-
8 section (b)(2).

9 **SEC. 4. REQUIRED TRAINING AND BENEFITS.**

10 (a) CHANGES IN EMPLOYMENT POSITION.—

11 (1) IN GENERAL.—An employer who is required
12 under section 3(b) to provide notice of technology
13 that will result in a change in employment position
14 and require different skills due to the use of tech-
15 nology for one or more employees shall, beginning
16 not later than 180 days before changing employee
17 positions due to technology, provide on-the-job train-
18 ing described in paragraph (2) to each affected em-
19 ployee who will be impacted by the technology.

20 (2) TYPE OF TRAINING.—The training provided
21 under paragraph (1) shall—

22 (A) be training that prepares the employee
23 to be able to fulfill the new duties of the posi-
24 tion, without regard to the length of time the
25 training will take; and

(B) be supplemented, as necessary, by employer-paid training—

- (i) through a registered apprenticeship program;
- (ii) that leads to a recognized postsecondary credential (which may be an industry-recognized credential) offered by an institution of higher education; or
- (iii) that leads to an industry-recognized credential offered by a nonprofit organization that is an eligible provider under section 122(d) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C. 3152(d)).

15 (b) EMPLOYMENT LOSS.—

described in paragraph (2) for not less than 1 year to prepare the employee for—

(i) another position with the employer

that provides wages comparable to the employee's original position; or

(ii) an occupation that provides wages

comparable to the employee's original position with a different employer; and

(C) on the day that the employee experi-

ences the employment loss, provide the affected employee with 6 months of severance pay, in a total amount equal to 6 months of the employee's wages in the employee's prior position.

(2) TYPE OF TRAINING.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The training provided under paragraph (1) (except for training described in paragraph (1)(B)(ii)) shall be training that is—

(i) chosen by the employee; and

(ii) provided at the worksite or supple-

mented as necessary by employer-paid training—

(I) through a registered appren-

ticeship program; or

(II) that leads to a recognized postsecondary credential offered by an institution of higher education.

19 (c) BASIC SKILLS TRAINING.—

20 (1) IN GENERAL.—If an employee subject to a
21 change in employment position or employment loss
22 would need, in addition to job training for a new po-
23 sition, additional basic skills (such as a high school
24 diploma or its equivalent) to meet the requirements
25 for the new employment position, the employer of

1 the employee shall provide the employee with 180
2 days of training to assist the employee in gaining
3 the minimum basic skills necessary.

4 (2) INTERACTION WITH OTHER TRAINING.—
5 Basic skills training provided to an employee under
6 this subsection, and the 180-day period for its provi-
7 sion, shall be in addition to any other training to
8 which the employee has a right under this Act.

9 (3) LOCATION OF TRAINING.—The basic skills
10 training provided under paragraph (1) may be pro-
11 vided through an on-site or off-site basic skills pro-
12 gram.

13 (d) NO REDUCTION IN PAY.—An employer shall pro-
14 vide any training required under subsection (a), (b), or
15 (c) during the affected employee's work hours and shall
16 not reduce an employee's pay or benefits while the em-
17 ployee is receiving training.

18 (e) SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION DOCU-
19 MENTATION.—An employer that provides an affected em-
20 ployee with any compensation under this section shall sub-
21 mit documentation to the Social Security Administration
22 to ensure that any compensation distributed to employees
23 under this Act is allocated to the appropriate calendar
24 year.

1 SEC. 5. PROTECTIONS FOR EMPLOYEES.

2 No employer shall discharge or in any manner dis-
3 criminate against any employee of the employer with re-
4 spect to the employee's compensation, terms, conditions,
5 or other privileges of employment because—

6 (1) the employee has received training or sever-
7 ance pay under this Act; or

8 (2) the employee (or an individual acting at the
9 request of the employee) has—

10 (A) requested new employment for the em-
11 ployee with the employer under this Act; or

12 (B) otherwise asserted or sought to enforce
13 the employee's rights under this Act.

**14 SEC. 6. ADMINISTRATION AND ENFORCEMENT OF RE-
15 QUIREMENTS.****16 (a) CIVIL ACTIONS AGAINST EMPLOYERS.—**

17 (1) VIOLATIONS OF NOTICE, PAY, AND TRAIN-
18 ING REQUIREMENTS.—

19 (A) IN GENERAL.—An affected employee
20 aggrieved of a violation of section 3, 4, or 5 by
21 an employer, or the chosen representative of
22 such affected employee, may bring a civil action
23 in accordance with this subsection.

24 (B) REMEDIES.—A court shall award an
25 affected employee who prevails in a civil action
26 brought under subparagraph (A)—

1 (i) subject to subparagraphs (C) and

2 (D)—

11 of

(bb) the final regular rate received by such employee before the violation;

(II) the cost of any benefits lost under an employee benefit plan described in section 3(3) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (29 U.S.C. 1002(3)) due to the violation, including the cost of medical expenses incurred during an employment loss that would have been covered under an employee benefit plan if the violation had not occurred; and

(III) any amounts due the employee under section 4(b)(1)(C);

(iii) any equitable relief, including injunctive relief, the court determines necessary to remedy the violation of this Act, which, for a violation of section 5, may include employment, reinstatement, promotion, or any other appropriate relief.

(D) REDUCTIONS IN LIABILITY.—The amount of damages—

(I) any wages paid by the employer to the employee for the period of the violation;

(II) any voluntary and unconditional payment by the employer to the employee that is not required by any legal obligation; and

(III) any payment by the employer to a third party or trustee (such as premiums for health benefits or payments to a defined contribution pension plan) on behalf of and attributable to the employee for the period of the violation; and

- (ii) under subparagraph (B)(i)(II)
 - be reduced by crediting the employee in service for all purposes under a defined benefit pensions plan for the period of the violation.

24 (b) ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS.—

25 (1) ACTIONS BY THE SECRETARY.—

5 (B) SUMS RECOVERED.—Any sums recov-
6 ered by the Secretary on behalf of an employee
7 under subsection (a)(1) shall be held in a spe-
8 cial deposit account and shall be paid, on order
9 of the Secretary, directly to each employee af-
10 fected. Any such sums not paid to an employee
11 because of inability to do so within a period of
12 3 years shall be credited as an offsetting collec-
13 tion to the appropriations account of the Sec-
14 retary for expenses for the administration of
15 this Act and shall remain available to the Sec-
16 retary until expended.

(2) STATE ENFORCEMENT.—In any case in which the attorney general of a State has reason to believe that an interest of employees of that State has been or is threatened or adversely affected by a violation of this Act, the attorney general of the State may, as parens patriae, bring a civil action on behalf of the employees of the State in an appropriate State court or district court of the United States to obtain any relief described in paragraph (1)(A) on behalf of residents in the State. Any sums recovered by the State shall be administered by the attorney general of the State in the same manner as described in paragraph (1)(B).

14 (c) CIVIL FINES.—

15 (1) IN GENERAL.—Any employer who violates
16 the provisions of section 3, 4, or 5 shall be subject
17 to a civil fine, assessed by the Secretary of Labor,
18 of not more than \$5,000 for each employee and for
19 each day of such violation.

(2) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in paragraph (1) shall be construed to preclude an employee of an employer assessed a civil fine under such paragraph from bringing a civil action against the employer under subsection (a).

1 (3) GOOD FAITH.—If an employer that has vio-
2 lated this Act proves to the satisfaction of the court
3 that the act or omission that violated this Act was
4 in good faith and that the employer had reasonable
5 grounds for believing that the act or omission was
6 not a violation of this Act, the court may, in its dis-
7 cretion, reduce the civil fine under this subsection.

8 **SEC. 7. RULES REGARDING RIGHTS AND REMEDIES.**

9 (a) RIGHTS AND REMEDIES NOT SUBJECT TO WAIV-
10 ER.—

11 (1) IN GENERAL.—The rights and remedies
12 provided under this Act (including the right to main-
13 tain a civil action) may not be waived, deferred, or
14 lost pursuant to any agreement or settlement other
15 than an agreement or settlement described in para-
16 graph (2).

17 (2) AGREEMENT OR SETTLEMENT.—An agree-
18 ment or settlement referred to in paragraph (1) is
19 an agreement or settlement negotiated by the Sec-
20 retary, an attorney general of any State, a private
21 attorney on behalf of affected employees, or a des-
22 ignated representative of affected employees under
23 the National Labor Relations Act (29 U.S.C. 151 et
24 seq.) or the Railway Labor Act (45 U.S.C. 151 et
25 seq.).

1 (b) INTERACTION WITH OTHER RIGHTS AND REM-
2 EDIES.—The rights and remedies provided to employees
3 by this Act are in addition to, and not in lieu of, any other
4 contractual or statutory rights and remedies of the em-
5 ployees, and are not intended to alter or affect such rights
6 and remedies, except that the period of notification re-
7 quired by this Act shall run concurrently with any period
8 of notification required by contract or by any other stat-
9 ute.

10 (c) EFFECT ON OTHER LAWS.—The giving of notice
11 pursuant to this Act, if done in good faith compliance with
12 this Act, shall not constitute a violation of the National
13 Labor Relations Act (29 U.S.C. 151 et seq.) or the Rail-
14 way Labor Act (45 U.S.C. 151 et seq.).

15 **SEC. 8. LIMITED REGULATORY AUTHORITY.**

16 (a) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in section
17 2(11)(B), the Secretary of Labor shall not have authority
18 to promulgate regulations to carry out this Act. The Sec-
19 retary of Labor may provide guidance that describes—

20 (1) the methods by which employers may pro-
21 vide for appropriate service of notice of bargaining
22 period under section 3(a) and notice of change in
23 employment position or loss of employment under
24 subsection (b) or (c) of section 3 to employees and
25 to representatives of employees;

- 1 (2) how an employer may comply with the re-
2 quirement to publicly post such notice under sub-
3 sections (b) and (c) of section 3; and
4 (3) what constitutes good faith under section
5 6(c)(3) for employers.

6 (b) METHODS OF NOTICE TO AFFECTED EMPLOY-
7 EES.—The mailing of notice to an employee's last known
8 address or inclusion of notice in the employee's paycheck
9 will be considered acceptable methods for fulfillment of the
10 employer's obligation to give notice to each affected em-
11 ployee under subsections (b)(2)(A) and (c) of section 3.

12 **SEC. 9. EXEMPTION OF CERTAIN PAYMENTS RELATED TO**
13 **EMPLOYMENT LOSS FROM GROSS INCOME.**

14 (a) IN GENERAL.—Part III of subchapter B of chap-
15 ter 1 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended
16 by inserting after section 103 the following new section:
17 **“SEC. 103A. CERTAIN PAYMENTS RELATED TO EMPLOY-**
18 **MENT LOSS.**

19 “(a) IN GENERAL.—In the case of an employee who
20 has experienced an employment loss, gross income shall
21 not include any of the following amounts related to such
22 employment loss:

23 “(1) Any severance pay provided pursuant to
24 section 4(b)(1)(C) of the Workers' Right to Training
25 Act.

1 “(2) Any amount received as a voucher for
2 training services pursuant to section 4(b)(2)(C) of
3 such Act.

4 “(3) Any back pay awarded by court pursuant
5 to section 6(a)(1)(B)(i)(I) of such Act.

6 “(b) DEFINITIONS.—The terms ‘employee’, ‘em-
7 ployer’, and ‘employment loss’ have the same meaning
8 given such terms under section 2 of the Workers’ Right
9 to Training Act.”.

10 (b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—The table of sec-
11 tions for part III of subchapter B of chapter 1 of the In-
12 ternal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by inserting
13 after the item related to section 103 the following new
14 item:

“See. 103A. Certain payments related to employment loss.”.

15 (c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by
16 this section shall apply to taxable years beginning after
17 December 31, 2019.

