

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 2281

To reauthorize the Job Corps program, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 21, 2025

Ms. WILSON of Florida introduced the following bill; which was referred to
the Committee on Education and Workforce

A BILL

To reauthorize the Job Corps program, 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 “Strengthening Job
5 Corps Act of 2025”.

6 **SEC. 2. AMENDMENTS RELATING TO JOB CORPS.**

7 (a) DEFINITIONS.—

8 (1) IN GENERAL.—Section 142 of the Work-
9 force Innovation and Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C.
10 3192) is amended—

1 (A) by amending paragraph (7) to read as
 2 follows:

3 “(7) JOB CORPS CAMPUS.—The term ‘Job
 4 Corps campus’ means a campus run by an operator
 5 selected by the Secretary pursuant to section 147,
 6 carrying out Job Corps activities.”; and

7 (B) by adding at the end the following:

8 “(11) STATE.—The term ‘State’ has the mean-
 9 ing given the term in section 3, except that such
 10 term also includes outlying areas (as defined in sec-
 11 tion 3).”.

12 (2) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—Subtitle C of
 13 title I of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity
 14 Act (29 U.S.C. 3191 et seq.) is amended—

15 (A) by striking “Job Corps center” each
 16 place such term appears and inserting “Job
 17 Corps campus”; and

18 (B) by striking “Job Corps centers” each
 19 place such term appears and inserting “Job
 20 Corps campuses”.

21 (b) INDIVIDUALS ELIGIBLE FOR THE JOB CORPS.—
 22 Section 144 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity
 23 Act (29 U.S.C. 3194) is amended—

24 (1) in subsection (a)—

1 (A) by amending paragraph (1) to read as
2 follows:

3 “(1) not less than age 16 and not more than
4 age 24 on the date of enrollment, except that such
5 maximum age limitation may be waived by the Sec-
6 retary, in accordance with regulations of the Sec-
7 retary, up to age 28 in the case of an individual with
8 a disability or a justice-involved individual; and”;

9 (B) by striking paragraph (2); and

10 (C) by redesignating paragraph (3) as
11 paragraph (2) and by amending such para-
12 graph—

13 (i) in subparagraph (A), by striking
14 “Basic skills deficient” and inserting “An
15 individual with foundational skill needs”;

16 (ii) in subparagraph (B), by striking
17 “A school dropout” and inserting “An op-
18 portunity youth”;

19 (iii) in subparagraph (D), by inserting
20 “or an individual who is pregnant” before
21 the period;

22 (iv) by adding at the end the fol-
23 lowing:

24 “(G)(i) A low-income individual as defined
25 in subsection (h)(4) of section 402A of the

1 Higher Education Amendments of 1992 (20
2 U.S.C. 1070a–11) as determined using proce-
3 dures similar to those in subsection 402a(e) of
4 such section; or

5 “(ii) a resident of a qualified opportunity
6 zone as defined in section 1400Z–1(a) of the
7 Internal Revenue Code of 1986.”; and

8 (2) by amending subsection (b) to read as fol-
9 lows:

10 “(b) SPECIAL RULE FOR VETERANS.—A veteran
11 shall be eligible to become an enrollee if the veteran meets
12 the requirements of subsection (a)(1).”.

13 (c) RECRUITMENT, SCREENING, SELECTION, AND
14 ASSIGNMENT OF ENROLLEES.—Section 145(a) of the
15 Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C.
16 3195(a)) is amended—

17 (1) in paragraph (2)—

18 (A) in subparagraph (D), by striking
19 “and” at the end;

20 (B) in subparagraph (E), by striking the
21 period at the end and inserting “; and”; and

22 (C) by adding at the end the following:

23 “(F) assist one-stop centers and other en-
24 tities identified in paragraph (3) in developing
25 joint applications for Job Corps, YouthBuild,

1 and youth workforce investment activities under
2 which an applicant may submit a single applica-
3 tion for all such programs.”; and
4 (2) in paragraph (5), by striking the last sen-
5 tence.

6 (d) **JOB CORPS CAMPUSES.**—Section 147 of the
7 Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C.
8 3197) is amended—

9 (1) in subsection (a)—

10 (A) in paragraph (2)—

11 (i) in subparagraph (A), by inserting
12 at the end the following: “Such award shall
13 be based upon best value and fair and rea-
14 sonable pricing.”; and

15 (ii) by amending subparagraph (B) to
16 read as follows:

17 “(B) **CONSIDERATIONS.**—

18 “(i) **STUDENT OUTCOMES.**—In select-
19 ing an entity to operate a Job Corps cam-
20 pus, the Secretary shall consider a numeric
21 metric of recent past effectiveness of the
22 entity in assisting opportunity youth to
23 connect to the workforce, to be calculated
24 based on data regarding—

1 “(I) the percentage of students
2 served by the entity who were in edu-
3 cation or training activities, or in un-
4 subsidized employment, during the
5 second quarter after exit from the rel-
6 evant program;

7 “(II) the percentage of students
8 served by the entity who were in edu-
9 cation or training activities, or in un-
10 subsidized employment, during the
11 fourth quarter after exit from the rel-
12 evant program;

13 “(III) the median earnings of
14 students served by the entity who
15 were in unsubsidized employment dur-
16 ing the second quarter after exit from
17 the relevant program;

18 “(IV) the percentage of students
19 served by the entity who obtained a
20 recognized postsecondary credential,
21 or a secondary school diploma or its
22 recognized equivalent, during partici-
23 pation in or within 1 year after exit
24 from the relevant program;

1 “(V) expected levels of perform-
2 ance established under section
3 159(c)(2) or similar metrics for re-
4 cruitment of eligible youth for rel-
5 evant contracts or grants.

6 “(ii) MARKET DEVELOPMENT.—

7 “(I) MENTOR-PROTÉGÉ PRO-
8 GRAM.—The Secretary shall carry out
9 a mentor-protégé program in accord-
10 ance with section 45 of the Small
11 Business Act (15 U.S.C. 657r) with
12 respect to Job Corps campus oper-
13 ations.

14 “(II) PAST-PERFORMANCE.—The
15 Secretary shall publish comparable al-
16 ternative metrics for entities without
17 previous experience in Job Corps cam-
18 pus operations to demonstrate their
19 past effectiveness in accordance with
20 the requirements of clause (i).”; and

21 (B) in paragraph (3)—

22 (i) in subparagraph (A), by inserting
23 “high-skill, high-wage, or” before “in-de-
24 mand”;

1 (ii) in subparagraph (C), by striking
2 “Workforce Investment Act of 1998” and
3 inserting “Workforce Innovation and Op-
4 portunity Act”;

5 (iii) by redesignating subparagraph
6 (K) as subparagraph (L); and

7 (iv) by inserting after subparagraph
8 (J) the following:

9 “(K) A description of the entity’s ability to
10 demonstrate a record of successfully operating
11 a safe learning and residential environment for
12 opportunity youth.”;

13 (2) in subsection (b), by striking paragraphs
14 (2) and (3) and inserting the following:

15 “(2) HIGH PERFORMANCE.—An entity shall be
16 considered to be an operator of a high-performing
17 campus if the Job Corps campus operated by the en-
18 tity was ranked among the top 25 percent of Job
19 Corps campuses, excluding Civilian Conservation
20 Centers described in subsection (d), for the two most
21 recent preceding program years.”;

22 (3) in subsection (d), by adding at the end the
23 following:

24 “(4) DIRECT HIRE AUTHORITY.—The Secretary
25 of Agriculture may appoint, without regard to the

1 provisions of subchapter I of chapter 33 of title 5,
2 United States Code (other than sections 3303 and
3 3328 of such title), a graduate of a Civilian Con-
4 servation Center who successfully completed a train-
5 ing program focused on forestry, wildland fire-
6 fighting, or another topic relating to the mission of
7 the Forest Service directly to a position with the De-
8 partment of Agriculture, Forest Service, for which
9 the candidate meets Office of Personnel Manage-
10 ment qualification standards.”;

11 (4) in subsection (f), by striking “2-year” and
12 inserting “4-year”; and

13 (5) in subsection (g)(1), by striking “the pre-
14 ceding year for which information is available” and
15 all that follows through the end and inserting “the
16 preceding year for which information is available,
17 such campus has been ranked in the lowest 10 per-
18 cent of Job Corps campuses.”.

19 (e) PROGRAM ACTIVITIES.—Section 148(a) of the
20 Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C.
21 3198(a)) is amended, in the subsection heading, by insert-
22 ing “Academic” before “Activities”.

23 (f) SUPPORT.—Section 150 of the Workforce Innova-
24 tion and Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C. 3200) is amended—

1 (1) in subsection (c), by striking “3 months”
2 and inserting “12 months”; and

3 (2) by adding at the end the following:

4 “(d) PERIOD OF TRANSITION.—Notwithstanding the
5 requirements of section 146(b), Job Corps graduates may
6 remain enrolled and a resident of a Job Corps campus
7 for not more than 1 month after graduation, subject to
8 approval by the director of the Job Corps Campus, in
9 order to facilitate their transition into independent living
10 and employment.”.

11 (g) OPERATIONS.—Section 151 of the Workforce In-
12 novation and Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C. 3201) is amend-
13 ed to read as follows:

14 **“SEC. 151. OPERATIONS.**

15 “(a) OPERATING PLAN.—

16 “(1) IN GENERAL.—The provisions of the con-
17 tract between the Secretary and an entity selected to
18 operate a Job Corps campus shall, including any
19 subsequent modifications to such contract, serve as
20 an operating plan for the Job Corps campus.

21 “(2) FEDERAL CHANGES TO OPERATING
22 PLAN.—The Secretary may require the operator to
23 submit additional information, as the Secretary
24 deems necessary for compliance with any relevant

1 regulations, which shall be considered part of the op-
2 erating plan.

3 “(3) AVAILABILITY.—The Secretary shall make
4 the operating plan described in paragraphs (1) and
5 (2), excluding any proprietary information, available
6 on a publicly accessible website.

7 “(b) LOCAL AUTHORITIES.—Subject to the limita-
8 tions of their approved budgets, the operators of Job
9 Corps campuses shall have the authority, without prior ap-
10 proval from the Secretary, to—

11 “(1) hire staff and invest in staff professional
12 development;

13 “(2) enter into agreements with local partners,
14 such as secondary and postsecondary schools or em-
15 ployers; and

16 “(3) engage with and educate stakeholders
17 about Job Corps operations and activities.”.

18 (h) STANDARDS OF CONDUCT.—Section 152 of the
19 Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C.
20 3202) is amended—

21 (1) in subsection (a), by striking the second
22 sentence;

23 (2) by amending subsection (b) to read as fol-
24 lows:

25 “(b) BEHAVIORAL MANAGEMENT PLAN.—

1 “(1) IN GENERAL.—As part of the operating
2 plan defined in section 151(a), the director of each
3 Job Corps campus shall develop and implement a be-
4 havioral management plan, subject to the approval
5 of the Secretary. Such plan shall include student
6 standards of conduct, positive behavioral interven-
7 tions and supports, and multi-tier systems of sup-
8 ports.

9 “(2) DISCIPLINARY MEASURES AND DRUG
10 TESTING.—

11 “(A) DISCIPLINARY MEASURES.—To pro-
12 mote the proper behavioral standards in the
13 Job Corps, the director of each Job Corps cam-
14 pus shall, consistent with the applicable behav-
15 ioral management plan described in paragraph
16 (1), have the authority to take appropriate dis-
17 ciplinary measures against enrollees if such di-
18 rector determines that an enrollee has com-
19 mitted a violation of the standards of conduct.
20 The director shall adopt a policy of dismissing
21 enrollees for an act of violence that seriously
22 endangers the safety of students, staff, or the
23 local community, and for illegal activity on the
24 campus.

25 “(B) DEFINITIONS.—In this paragraph:

1 “(i) CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE.—The
2 term ‘controlled substance’ has the mean-
3 ing given the term in section 102 of the
4 Controlled Substances Act (21 U.S.C.
5 802).

6 “(ii) ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY.—The
7 term ‘zero tolerance policy’ means a policy
8 under which an enrollee shall be automati-
9 cally dismissed from the Job Corps after a
10 determination by the director that the en-
11 rollee has carried out an act of violence
12 that seriously endangers the safety of stu-
13 dents, staff, or the local community or en-
14 gaged in an illegal activity on the campus.

15 “(3) ADVISORY GROUP.—The Secretary shall
16 periodically convene an advisory group of Job Corps
17 operators and service providers and subject matter
18 experts to review the reporting data collected under
19 paragraph (5) and provide recommendations for Job
20 Corps behavioral management plans based on evi-
21 dence-based research regarding effective and equi-
22 table behavioral policies.

23 “(4) LAW ENFORCEMENT AGREEMENTS.—The
24 directors of each Job Corps campus shall enter into
25 an agreement with the relevant local law enforce-

1 ment agency of jurisdiction regarding the procedures
2 for reporting and investigating potentially illegal ac-
3 tivity on Job Corps campuses.

4 “(5) INCIDENT REPORTING.—The Secretary
5 shall establish procedures for—

6 “(A) reporting significant health incidents,
7 including substance abuse, self-harm, and acci-
8 dents resulting in bodily harm; and

9 “(B) reporting significant behavioral inci-
10 dents, defined as acts of violence or illegal ac-
11 tivity.

12 “(6) ACCOUNTABILITY.—The Secretary shall
13 establish standards under which a Job Corps cam-
14 pus shall be required to take performance improve-
15 ment actions described in section 159(f), based on
16 an evaluation of such Job Corps campus, which shall
17 take into account reporting data collected under
18 paragraph (5) and recommendations of the advisory
19 group pursuant to paragraph (3).”.

20 (i) EXPERIMENTAL PROJECTS AND TECHNICAL AS-
21 SISTANCE.—Section 156(a) of the Workforce Innovation
22 and Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C. 3206(a)) is amended to
23 read as follows:

24 “(a) PROJECTS.—The Secretary may carry out ex-
25 perimental, research, or demonstration projects relating to

1 evidence-based strategies for improving the operations of
 2 a Job Corps campus that was ranked among the bottom
 3 10 percent of Job Corps campuses. The Secretary may
 4 waive any provisions of this subtitle that the Secretary
 5 finds would prevent the Secretary from carrying out the
 6 projects (other than sections 145, 147, and 159(c)) pro-
 7 vided that—

8 “(1) the project will not result in a reduction in
 9 the number of students served; and

10 “(2) if the Secretary informs the Committee on
 11 Education and Labor of the House of Representa-
 12 tives and the Committee on Health, Education,
 13 Labor, and Pensions of the Senate, in writing, not
 14 less than 90 days in advance of issuing such waiv-
 15 er.”.

16 (j) APPLICATION OF PROVISIONS OF FEDERAL
 17 LAW.—

18 (1) IN GENERAL.—Section 157 of the Work-
 19 force Innovation and Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C.
 20 3207) is amended by adding at the end the fol-
 21 lowing:

22 “(d) SERVICE CONTRACT ACT.—

23 “(1) IN GENERAL.—Operators and service pro-
 24 viders, including subcontractors thereto, are subject
 25 to and shall be required to abide by chapter 67 of

1 title 41, United States Code (commonly known as
2 the ‘McNamara-O’Hara Service Contract Act of
3 1965’).

4 “(2) ACADEMIC AND CAREER TECHNICAL IN-
5 STRUCTIONAL EMPLOYEES.—Notwithstanding sec-
6 tion 6701(3)(C) of such chapter, an academic or ca-
7 reer technical instructional employee at a Job Corps
8 campus shall be considered a ‘service employee’ for
9 purposes of applying such chapter under paragraph
10 (1).

11 “(3) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—To the extent
12 compensation levels being paid or scheduled to be
13 paid by an employer are, in the aggregate, greater
14 than those determined by the Secretary of Labor to
15 be required under this subsection, or as set forth in
16 a collective bargaining agreement, nothing herein
17 shall be construed to require a reduction of such
18 compensation.”.

19 (2) EFFECTIVE DATE.—

20 (A) AGREEMENTS IN EFFECT ON DATE OF
21 ENACTMENT.—Not later than 60 days after the
22 date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary
23 shall, subject to appropriations, modify all
24 agreements with operators and service providers
25 in effect as of such date of enactment to include

1 the requirements imposed by the amendment
2 made by paragraph (1).

3 (B) PENDING SOLICITATIONS.—Upon the
4 date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary
5 shall include the requirements imposed by the
6 amendment made by paragraph (1) in any
7 pending solicitation for an operator or service
8 provider.

9 (k) STAFFING.—

10 (1) IN GENERAL.—To ensure compliance with
11 chapter 67 of title 41, United States Code (com-
12 monly known as the ‘McNamara-O’Hara Service
13 Contract Act of 1965’), as such chapter is applied
14 by section 157(d) of the Workforce Innovation and
15 Opportunity Act, the staffing plan and the associ-
16 ated budget of an entity proposing to be an operator
17 or service provider for a Job Corps campus shall in-
18 corporate hourly wages (or salaries as appropriate)
19 and fringe benefit costs for occupational classifica-
20 tions at least equal to the wage determination deter-
21 mined by the Secretary of Labor for the locality of
22 the Job Corps campus. In preparing such wage de-
23 termination, the Secretary shall compare the specific
24 job classifications at the Job Corps campus with
25 those occupations most closely correlated with those

1 employed by public education providers in the local-
2 ity with the goal of ensuring equivalency to the max-
3 imum extent feasible.

4 (2) ADJUSTMENTS PERMITTED.—The Secretary
5 may further adjust compensation levels in a contract
6 with an operator or service provider to ensure suffi-
7 cient availability and retention of qualified personnel
8 in the locality.

9 (3) ANNUAL UPDATES.—The Secretary shall
10 update hourly wages (or salaries as appropriate) and
11 fringe benefit levels for such occupations covered in
12 this paragraph on an annual basis.

13 (l) SPECIAL PROVISIONS.—Section 158(f) of the
14 Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C.
15 3208(f)) is amended—

16 (1) by striking “Secretary” and inserting “di-
17 rectors of Job Corps campuses”;

18 (2) by striking “the Job Corps or individual”
19 and inserting “such”; and

20 (3) by adding at the end the following: “Any
21 real property acquired shall be directly transferred
22 to the Secretary in accordance with chapter 5 of title
23 40 and on a nonreimbursable basis.”.

1 (m) MANAGEMENT INFORMATION.—Section 159 of
 2 the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C.
 3 3209) is amended—

4 (1) in subsection (a), by adding at the end the
 5 following:

6 “(4) ANNUAL RECONCILIATION.—Prior to the
 7 expiration of any appropriated Job Corps operations
 8 funds for any fiscal year, any anticipated unobli-
 9 gated funds may, subject to appropriations, be obli-
 10 gated to projects identified under subsection
 11 (h)(1).”;

12 (2) in subsection (c)—

13 (A) by amending paragraph (1) to read as
 14 follows:

15 “(1) LEVELS OF PERFORMANCE AND INDICA-
 16 TORS.—

17 “(A) IN GENERAL.—At the start of each
 18 contract period, and at least every two program
 19 years in the case of Civilian Conservation Cen-
 20 ters, the Secretary shall establish expected lev-
 21 els of performance for each Job Corps campus
 22 relating to each of the primary indicators of
 23 performance for eligible youth described in sec-
 24 tion 116(b)(2)(A)(ii) using the model described
 25 in subparagraph (B).

1 “(B) PERFORMANCE MODEL.—At least
2 every four years and no more than every two
3 years, the Secretary shall develop a model for
4 establishing the expected levels of performance
5 for each Job Corps campus, in accordance with
6 the following:

7 “(i) EQUITY.—The model shall ac-
8 count for significant correlations between
9 various factors and student outcomes, in-
10 cluding:

11 “(I) Student demographics, in-
12 cluding age, gender, race, ethnicity,
13 documented disabilities, and education
14 level on entry.

15 “(II) Employment conditions in
16 students’ home communities.

17 “(ii) DEVELOPMENT.—The model
18 shall be developed by subject matter ex-
19 perts in the fields of Job Corps operations,
20 program evaluation, statistical analysis,
21 and related fields using available Job
22 Corps data as well as regional economic
23 data.

24 “(iii) TRANSPARENCY.—The perform-
25 ance model and the past effectiveness met-

1 ric identified in section 147(a)(2)(B)(i), in-
2 cluding the procedures outlined in section
3 147(a)(2)(B)(iv), shall be published for
4 comment in the Federal Register.”;

5 (B) in paragraph (2)—

6 (i) in subparagraph (A), by striking
7 “and” at the end; and

8 (ii) by striking subparagraph (B) and
9 inserting the following:

10 “(B) the number of enrollees recruited that
11 meet the requirements of section 144(a); and

12 “(C) the measurement described in sub-
13 paragraph (K) of subsection (d)(1).”; and

14 (C) in paragraph (4)—

15 (i) in subparagraph (A), by striking
16 “and” at the end;

17 (ii) in subparagraph (B), by striking
18 the period at the end and inserting “;
19 and”; and

20 (iii) by adding at the end the fol-
21 lowing:

22 “(C) information on the performance of
23 the Job Corps selection process in section
24 147(a)(2) with respect to increasing perform-
25 ance as measured pursuant to subparagraph

1 (A), specifically including information on the
2 performance of each Job Corps campus as com-
3 pared to its annual performance immediately
4 prior to its current operating agreement.”;

5 (3) in subsection (d)(1)—

6 (A) by striking subparagraph (I); and

7 (B) by redesignating subparagraphs (J)
8 through (O) as subparagraphs (I) through (N),
9 respectively;

10 (4) in subsection (f)—

11 (A) in paragraph (2)—

12 (i) in subparagraph (E), by adding
13 “or” at the end;

14 (ii) in subparagraph (F), by striking
15 “; or” and inserting a period; and

16 (iii) by striking subparagraph (G);

17 and

18 (B) by amending paragraph (4) to read as

19 follows:

20 “(4) CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CENTERS.—In
21 addition to the primary indicators of performance
22 specified in subsection (c)(1), Civilian Conservation
23 Centers shall be evaluated on their contribution to
24 the nation’s conservation goals by the Secretaries of
25 Agriculture and Labor. If the Secretaries jointly

1 conclude that a Civilian Conservation Center is not
 2 meeting these dual performance goals, they may
 3 take performance improvement actions described in
 4 subparagraph (A), (B), or (C) of paragraph (2) of
 5 this subsection.”; and

6 (5) in subsection (g)(2)—

7 (A) by striking “has entered” and insert-
 8 ing “enters”; and

9 (B) by striking “comply” and inserting
 10 “attest to compliance”.

11 (n) TECHNICAL AMENDMENT.—Subtitle C of title I
 12 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (29
 13 U.S.C. 3191 et seq.) is amended by striking “Committee
 14 on Education and the Workforce” each place it appears
 15 and inserting “Committee on Education and Labor”.

16 (o) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—Section
 17 162 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (29
 18 U.S.C. 3212) is amended to read as follows:

19 **“SEC. 162. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

20 “(a) IN GENERAL.—There are authorized to be ap-
 21 propriated to carry out this subtitle—

22 “(1) \$1,809,857,925 for fiscal year 2026;

23 “(2) \$1,873,202,952 for fiscal year 2027;

24 “(3) \$1,938,765,056 for fiscal year 2028;

25 “(4) \$2,006,621,833 for fiscal year 2029;

1 “(5) \$2,076,853,597 for fiscal year 2030; and

2 “(6) \$2,149,543,473 for fiscal year 2031.

3 “(b) CONSTRUCTION COSTS.—Of the amount author-
4 ized in subsection (a) for each of fiscal years 2026 through
5 2031, \$107,800,000 shall be for construction, rehabilita-
6 tion, and acquisition of Job Corps Campuses.”.

○