

S. 1181

At the request of Mr. MENENDEZ, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1181, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to exempt certain stock of real estate investment trusts from the tax on foreign investments in United States real property interests, and for other purposes.

S. 1195

At the request of Mr. BARRASSO, the names of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE) and the Senator from Idaho (Mr. RISCH) were added as cosponsors of S. 1195, a bill to repeal the renewable fuel standard.

S. 1211

At the request of Mrs. BOXER, the names of the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) and the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER) were added as cosponsors of S. 1211, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to prohibit the use of the phrases GI Bill and Post-9/11 GI Bill to give a false impression of approval or endorsement by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

S. 1215

At the request of Mr. LEAHY, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. UDALL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1215, a bill to strengthen privacy protections, accountability, and oversight related to domestic surveillance conducted pursuant to the USA PATRIOT Act and the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act of 1978.

S. 1238

At the request of Mr. REED, the names of the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) and the Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER) were added as cosponsors of S. 1238, a bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to extend the current reduced interest rate for undergraduate Federal Direct Stafford Loans for 1 year, to modify required distribution rules for pension plans, and for other purposes.

S. 1241

At the request of Mr. MANCHIN, the names of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. PORTMAN) and the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT) were added as cosponsors of S. 1241, a bill to establish the interest rate for certain Federal student loans, and for other purposes.

S. 1256

At the request of Mrs. FEINSTEIN, the name of the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1256, a bill to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to preserve the effectiveness of medically important antimicrobials used in the treatment of human and animal diseases.

S. RES. 164

At the request of Mr. UDALL of Colorado, the name of the Senator from Nevada (Mr. REID) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 164, a resolution designating October 30, 2013, as a national day of remembrance for nuclear weapons program workers.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. FRANKEN (for himself, Mr. SCHATZ, and Mr. DURBIN):

S. 1269. A bill to amend the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 to support community college and industry partnerships, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mr. FRANKEN. Mr. President, I rise to speak about legislation that I am introducing called the Community College to Career Fund Act. This legislation is aimed at closing what is called the skills gap—the gap between the skills that businesses need to fill open positions, and the skills that workers have. Closing the skills gap will mean more Americans get jobs and businesses get the workforce they need. It is key to the future prosperity and economic competitiveness of our Nation.

When I travel around Minnesota and talk to employers, the single biggest thing they tell me they need is a workforce capable of handling the jobs of the 21st century. Finding qualified employees is particularly a problem for our manufacturers. Recent surveys in Minnesota show that 1/3 to 1/2 of manufacturers have job openings that they can't fill. They want to hire people, but they can't, because they can't find employees with the skills they need.

Meanwhile, unemployment continues to be far too high. With so many Americans still looking for jobs, and employers seeking to fill open positions, this is a problem that we have to solve.

Minnesota and many other States are working to address this problem by bringing businesses and community colleges together. There is a lot we can learn from these efforts, and my legislation supports and builds on what has been working in Minnesota.

Take, for example, Hennepin Technical College in Minnesota. Local manufacturers have joined with Hennepin Tech to form the M-Powered Program, which trains students in manufacturing skills so they can fill open jobs. When I met with them recently, they told me that 93 percent of the program's nearly 300 graduates have permanent jobs. That is a program that's working.

In Alexandria, MN, businesses and community colleges have been working together for years and offer another powerful example of success. Douglas County is like the Silicon Valley of packaging machines, and businesses there work with Alexandria Technical and Community College, which is ranked one of the best in the country. The manufacturers have donated machinery to train the students so that they can gain the skills needed for jobs at those businesses. When they graduate, students get snapped up by one of the companies. In fact, at the height of the recession in 2009–2010, Douglas County's unemployment rate was a good 3 points lower than the rest of the State.

There is the Right Skills Now program, which is a partnership between

the Manufacturing Institute, ACT, the National Institute of Metalworking Skills and the President's Job council. This program started as a pilot program in Minnesota, and has since expanded to Nevada and Michigan. I visited the program at South Central College in Faribault, MN, and held a roundtable with participating businesses. I asked each of them how many jobs they were ready to hire for, and between them, there were 40 or 50 jobs that needed to be filled. There were only 17 students in the first term that this program was offered, and the numbers are obviously in those students' favor to find a job.

There are many other examples of this approach working in Minnesota, as well as across the country. It is happening in Rochester, Brainerd, and Duluth, Minnesota. The Employment and Workplace Safety Subcommittee of the HELP Committee held a hearing last year where we heard about four great examples of these partnerships from all over the country. This approach is putting Americans back to work and helping businesses grow nationwide, and we need to support those efforts.

That is exactly what my bill would do. It would create a Community College to Career Fund, which would offer competitive grants for partnerships between businesses and community colleges aimed at closing the skills gap. The partnerships would compete by demonstrating how they would fill in-demand jobs.

This bill rewards what works, giving flexibility for the partnerships to determine the strategy that best fits their needs, including apprenticeships, paid internships, partnerships with high schools, or updating training equipment. My bill also leverages private investments, rewarding those partnerships that bring outside resources to the table.

I hear all the time from businesses that are desperate to hire people, if only they could find the right talent. This is a tremendous opportunity to get Americans back to work by helping them get the skills that they need. The Community College to Career Fund Act would seize that opportunity, allow our businesses to grow and expand, and position our workforce, and our country, for prosperity into the future. I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

NOTICES OF HEARINGS

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR,
AND PENSIONS

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I wish to announce that the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions will meet in executive session on Wednesday, July 10, 2013, at 10 a.m. in room 430 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building to mark-up S. 815, Employment Non-Discrimination Act of 2013 and any nominations cleared for action.

For further information regarding this meeting, please contact the Committee at (202) 224-5375.