

The Economic Ladders to End Volatility and Advance Training to Employment (ELEVATE) Act

Background: Despite the low unemployment rate in the United States, millions of workers are being left behind in today's economy, and employers across the country are having trouble finding workers to fill current jobs openings. While the cause of this "workforce gap" varies depending on the specific jobs, sectors, and regions, more must be done to bridge the gap and connect job seekers with quality jobs that enable them and their families to move up the economic ladder. Many workers face significant barriers to labor market entry, such as discrimination due to past incarceration or the lack of quality affordable child care. Moreover, employers often struggle to benefit from and collaborate with local workforce development offices given inconsistent and often siloed funding.

Summary: The ELEVATE Act would provide funding for public and private subsidized employment programs. It would address both cyclical and structural unemployment by increasing funds in times of (and in areas with) high unemployment and targeting workers with particular barriers to employment. ELEVATE job-seekers would receive up to six months paid employment, job training, and wraparound services, such as child care, to make them successful in the current job market upon completion of a program. To promote worker mobility and entrepreneurship, ELEVATE would also create federal self-employment and relocation assistance programs for qualified workers to help them afford the cost of moving and starting their own businesses.

Investing in Jobs:

- Creates new Social Security Act jobs program to pay for individuals to receive six months of wages and benefits for public, private, non-profit, or social enterprise sector jobs
- Supports job readiness, training and work supports by subsidizing costs of training, job search and services, such as child care and transportation, that are directly related to employment
- Targets individuals with barriers to employment, such as the long-term unemployed, dislocated workers, formerly incarcerated, and homeless individuals

Identifying and Rewarding Pro-Growth Employers:

- Establishes new criteria for "Pro-Worker Employers" and authorizes a demo program to reward those employers who: ensure predictable work hours; provide paid family and medical leave programs, paid sick days, health insurance, child care, and paid time off; pay employees a living wage; and provide access to education and training opportunities and promote career pathways for entry-level workers
- Creates an employment retention tax credit for employers who retain ELEVATE-hired employees for at least 24 months

Promoting Entrepreneurship and Mobility:

- Allows eligible individuals to receive federal assistance to help offset the cost of moving within or between states to improve job prospects
- Allows eligible individuals with a viable business plan to receive a self-employment assistance stipend, in lieu of unemployment insurance, to start their own business