

## **Connecting Youth to Jobs Act of 2021**

The public health and economic crises of the past year have exacerbated existing inequities—and young people will disproportionately bear those burdens moving forward. As the United States continues to build back from the consequences of the coronavirus pandemic, Congress must enact a national subsidized jobs program that includes bold investment in equity-centered youth employment.

I am introducing the *Connecting Youth to Jobs Act* to create living-wage employment opportunities for young people facing barriers to employment and historically disadvantaged youth. Specifically, the bill would:

- **Support employment opportunities for youth with barriers to unemployment and historically disadvantaged populations.**

The *Connecting Youth to Jobs Act* creates federally subsidized employment opportunities by providing States and local areas with funds for employment programs that lead to unsubsidized, full time employment or provide the necessary skills for at least one postsecondary credential.

Youth with barriers to employment are broadly defined to include youth of color, out-of-school youth, low-income youth, youth impacted by the criminal justice system, foster youth, youth experiencing homelessness, and more. Program participants must be between the ages of 14 and 24.

The bill sets a minimum wage of at least \$15 for all program participants and protects their right to join in union activity when applicable.

- **Establish a \$10 billion competitive grant for providing wraparound services to youth employment program participants and work-based learning opportunities for youth.**

The *Connecting Youth to Jobs Act* offers grants for community organizations, labor unions, tribal organizations and other nonprofits and partnerships to provide direct financial assistance for support services that help youth overcome barriers to sustained employment. These support services may include housing, health care, transportation, child care, access to technology, and more.

These grants may also be used by eligible organizations to connect youth to employment opportunities, registered apprenticeship programs, or public education opportunities.

- **Direct the Department of Labor (DOL) to collect youth employment program performance data and submit a report to Congress.**

The *Connecting Youth to Jobs Act* requires the collection of performance data within one year of enactment. It also requires DOL to review and assess the programs and equity, diversity and inclusion activities funded under the Act and submit a report to Congress.