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**Senators Heller, Hagan, Donnelly Introduce Bipartisan Jobs Bill**

*AMERICA Works Act will help address skills gap to ensure workers are trained for jobs that are available*

**(Washington, D.C.) –** U.S. Senators Dean Heller (R-NV), Kay Hagan (D-NC), and Joe Donnelly (D-IN) today introduced a commonsense jobs bill to help address the skills gap and ensure that workers are being trained for the jobs that are available. The bipartisan *AMERICA Works Act,* which doesn’t add a dime to the deficit, establishes a national industry-recognized credentialing system that ties the needs of American businesses to the curriculums of community colleges and job-training centers – matching the skills training with the needs of employers.

For a summary of the *AMERICA Works Act*, [click here](http://www.hagan.senate.gov/files/documents/AMERICA_Works_Act_One_Pager.pdf).

“At a time when so many Nevadans are looking for jobs, no position should remain empty. The AMERICA Works Act will help employers find employees with the right skill set for the job. I’ve had many conversations with Nevadans who are having a difficult time finding well-suited workers, but this legislation is a step in the right direction towards solving such an unnecessary problem. I’m proud to take the lead on this bipartisan jobs bill with Senators Hagan and Donnelly,” **said Heller.**

“As we work to get our economy back on track, we have to ensure that job training translates into real-world job readiness,” **said Hagan.** “Employers across North Carolina tell me that there is often a disconnect between the skills held by job seekers and the skills they need in potential employees. The *AMERICA Works Act* goes right to the core of this issue by ensuring that job-training programs actually prepare people to enter the workforce – in industries ranging from manufacturing to biotechnology. This bill doesn’t add one dime to our deficit and, it is the kind of commonsense jobs approach that can bring Democrats and Republicans together. In this economy, no family should struggle to make ends meet while employers struggle to fill open jobs.”

“I am proud to join Sens. Hagan and Heller in introducing the AMERICA Works Act because it is an example of the common sense, straightforward work Congress can be doing to improve our nation’s economy,” **said Donnelly.** “I have heard time after time from Hoosier business owners, educators, and workers about the pressing need to close the skills gap and get more people to work. The improvements made in this bill would be a benefit for both workers and employers, as workers would know that the time they spend training is more likely to lead to employment in a well-paying job, and employers would be more likely to hire people who they know have the training they need to be productive on day one.”

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 12.3 million Americans are currently out of work. But a [recent Manpower survey](http://www.manpowergroup.us/campaigns/talent-shortage-2012/pdf/2012_Talent_Shortage_Survey_Results_US_FINALFINAL.pdf) indicates that nearly 50 percent of employers are having trouble filling their open jobs. In the manufacturing industry alone, 67 percent of manufacturers have a moderate to severe shortage of available and qualified workers. Recent data show manufacturing companies cannot fill as many as 600,000 skilled positions.

The *AMERICA Works Act*, which does not add a dime to the federal deficit, will encourage national industries, including manufacturing, automotive and aerospace, to come together and agree upon the skill sets they most commonly seek in potential employees. Once the industries have agreed upon standards, curricula will be developed for training programs at community colleges that will offer industry-recognized credentials. Workers who have earned an industry-recognized credential will be able to find work anywhere in the country.

The legislation, which is supported by the National Association of Manufacturers and many other associations, employers, and educators, incentivizes existing federal job training programs to implement the new, industry-recognized credential system. These existing programs are included under the Workforce Investment Act, the Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act, and the Trade Adjustment Assistance Act.

The bill will now be referred to the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee, of which Hagan is a member.

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