

119TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

**S.** \_\_\_\_\_

To clarify the program standards registration process for registered apprenticeship programs, and for other purposes.

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

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Mr. BANKS (for himself and Mr. CASSIDY) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on \_\_\_\_\_

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**A BILL**

To clarify the program standards registration process for registered apprenticeship programs, 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 “Streamlining Timely  
5 Apprenticeship Registration and Transparency Act” or  
6 the “START Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM STANDARDS AP-**  
2 **PROVAL.**

3 The Act of August 16, 1937 (commonly known as  
4 the “National Apprenticeship Act”; 50 Stat. 664, chapter  
5 663; 29 U.S.C. 50 et seq.) is amended—

6 (1) by redesignating section 4 as section 5; and

7 (2) by inserting after section 3 the following:

8 **“SEC. 4. APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM REGISTRATION.**

9 “(a) DEFINITIONS.—For purposes of this section:

10 “(1) COMPETENCY-BASED APPROACH.—

11 “(A) IN GENERAL.—The term ‘com-  
12 petency-based approach’ means, with respect to  
13 a program registered as an apprenticeship pro-  
14 gram under this Act, measuring skill acquisi-  
15 tion in the program through the successful  
16 demonstration of acquired skills and knowledge,  
17 as verified by the program sponsor.

18 “(B) ON-THE-JOB LEARNING.—A program  
19 described in subparagraph (A) program that  
20 uses the competency-based approach shall be  
21 required to include completion of an on-the-job  
22 learning component of the program for pur-  
23 poses of such an approach.

24 “(2) COMPLETE PROGRAM STANDARDS.—The  
25 term ‘complete program standards’ means program  
26 standards submitted to the Secretary or a State ap-

1       prenticeship agency in accordance with subsection  
2       (b)(1) that—

3               “(A) satisfy each of the requirements in  
4               subparagraphs (A) through (D) of such sub-  
5               section; and

6               “(B) do not contain clerical errors as de-  
7               termined by the Secretary or State apprentice-  
8               ship agency.

9               “(3) INCOMPLETE PROGRAM STANDARDS.—The  
10              term ‘incomplete program standards’ means pro-  
11              gram standards submitted to the Secretary or a  
12              State apprenticeship agency in accordance with sub-  
13              section (b)(1) that—

14              “(A) fail to satisfy one or more of the re-  
15              quirements in subparagraphs (A) through (D)  
16              of such subsection; or

17              “(B) contain clerical errors as determined  
18              by the Secretary or State apprenticeship agen-  
19              cy.

20              “(4) NATIONAL APPRENTICESHIP SYSTEM.—  
21              The term ‘national apprenticeship system’ means the  
22              system established by the Secretary of Labor to  
23              carry out the activities authorized and directed to be  
24              carried out under section 1.

1           “(5) SECRETARY.—The term ‘Secretary’ means  
2           the Secretary of Labor.

3           “(6) STATE APPRENTICESHIP AGENCY.—The  
4           term ‘State apprenticeship agency’ means an entity  
5           of the government of a State that is recognized,  
6           under criteria established by the Secretary, for pur-  
7           poses of approving program standards that conform  
8           with the standards set by the Secretary for reg-  
9           istering apprenticeship programs under the national  
10          apprenticeship system.

11          “(7) TIME-BASED APPROACH.—The term ‘time-  
12          based approach’ means, with respect to a program  
13          registered as an apprenticeship program under this  
14          Act, measuring skill acquisition in the program  
15          through the completion of at least 2,000 hours of  
16          on-the-job learning as described in a work process  
17          schedule.

18          “(b) IN GENERAL.—In administering this Act the  
19          Secretary shall establish a national apprenticeship system  
20          that provides the following:

21                 “(1) PROGRAM STANDARDS FOR REGISTRA-  
22                 TION.—A person seeking to register a program as  
23                 an apprenticeship program under this Act shall sub-  
24                 mit program standards to the Secretary or, as rel-  
25                 evant, a State apprenticeship agency at such time

1       and in such manner as the Secretary may require,  
2       that—

3               “(A) list each of the entities involved in  
4               the program, including any employer, group of  
5               employers, employer association, labor organiza-  
6               tion, or labor-management organization;

7               “(B) specify whether the program uses a  
8               competency-based, time-based, or hybrid ap-  
9               proach;

10              “(C) provide sufficient information to de-  
11              termine whether the apprenticeship program  
12              standards conform with wage, safety, and li-  
13              censing standards required by the State in  
14              which the program will operate and any other  
15              State standards with which the Secretary re-  
16              quires entities submitting program standards to  
17              comply; and

18              “(D) provide sufficient information to de-  
19              termine whether the apprenticeship program  
20              standards conform with standards of appren-  
21              ticeship established by the Secretary under this  
22              Act, including the requirements under part 29  
23              of title 29, Code of Federal Regulations (or suc-  
24              cessor regulations).

25              “(2) REVIEWING PROGRAM STANDARDS.—

1           “(A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90  
2 days after receipt by the Secretary or a State  
3 apprenticeship agency of program standards  
4 submitted in accordance with paragraph (1),  
5 the Secretary or State apprenticeship agency  
6 shall, if the program standards are complete  
7 program standards, provide to the prospective  
8 sponsor a decision that—

9                   “(i) approves or denies the program  
10 standards; and

11                   “(ii) if the decision is a denial, states  
12 the areas of noncompliance and provides  
13 suggestive action to correct the noncompli-  
14 ance.

15           “(B) INCOMPLETE PROGRAM STAND-  
16 ARDS.—Not later than 30 days after receipt by  
17 the Secretary or a State apprenticeship agency  
18 of program standards submitted in accordance  
19 with paragraph (1), the Secretary or State ap-  
20 prenticeship agency shall, if the program stand-  
21 ards are incomplete program standards, provide  
22 the prospective sponsor with corrective feedback  
23 to direct the prospective sponsor to bring such  
24 program standards into conformity with com-  
25 plete program standards.

1           “(C) PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY.—  
2           Beginning not later than 120 days after the  
3           date of enactment of this section, the Secretary  
4           shall, on a monthly basis, make publicly avail-  
5           able online the average response times by the  
6           Secretary to standards submitted in accordance  
7           with paragraph (1), disaggregated by whether  
8           the standards are complete program standards  
9           or incomplete program standards.”.

10 **SEC. 3. CLARIFICATION OF THE ROLE OF STATE APPREN-**  
11 **TICESHIP COUNCILS.**

12           (a) IN GENERAL.—The Act of August 16, 1937  
13 (commonly known as the “National Apprenticeship Act”;  
14 50 Stat. 664, chapter 663; 29 U.S.C. 50 et seq.), as  
15 amended by section 2, is further amended by adding at  
16 the end of section 4 of such Act (as added by section 2)  
17 the following:

18           “(3) STATE APPRENTICESHIP COUNCILS.—A  
19           State apprenticeship council of any State apprentice-  
20           ship agency shall not—

21                   “(A) have the final decision making au-  
22                   thority for purposes of paragraph (2) over any  
23                   program standards submitted in accordance  
24                   with this subsection; or

1                   “(B) be required to recommend any such  
2                   program standards for purposes of such para-  
3                   graph.”.

4           (b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by  
5 subsection (a) shall take effect on the date that is 2 years  
6 after the date of enactment of this Act.

7 **SEC. 4. APPRENTICESHIP GRANT PROGRAM.**

8           (a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

9                   (1) APPRENTICE.—The term “apprentice”  
10                   means an individual participating in a registered ap-  
11                   prenticeship program.

12                   (2) NEW APPRENTICE.—The term “new ap-  
13                   prentice” means, with respect to applying the for-  
14                   mula established under subsection (c)(1) for a pro-  
15                   gram year, an apprentice who is newly enrolled in a  
16                   registered apprenticeship program in such program  
17                   year.

18                   (3) PROGRAM YEAR.—The term “program  
19                   year” means the year period beginning on July 1  
20                   and ending on June 30 of the next year.

21                   (4) REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM.—  
22                   The term “registered apprenticeship program”  
23                   means an apprenticeship program registered under  
24                   the Act of August 16, 1937 (commonly known as

1 the “National Apprenticeship Act”; 50 Stat. 664,  
2 chapter 663; 29 U.S.C. 50 et seq.).

3 (5) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means  
4 the Secretary of Labor.

5 (6) STATE.—Except in subsection (c)(1)(C), the  
6 term “State” means each of the several States of  
7 the United States, the District of Columbia, and any  
8 territory or possession of the United States.

9 (7) STATE APPRENTICESHIP AGENCY.—The  
10 term “State apprenticeship agency” has the meaning  
11 given such term in section 4 of the Act of August  
12 16, 1937 (commonly known as the “National Ap-  
13 prenticeship Act”; 50 Stat. 664, chapter 663; 29  
14 U.S.C. 50 et seq.).

15 (b) IN GENERAL.—For each program year that be-  
16 gins after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary  
17 shall, not later than the beginning of the program year,  
18 award grants to States for the program year, in accord-  
19 ance with the formula under subsection (c), to carry out  
20 the activities described in subsection (d).

21 (c) AWARD PROCEDURES.—The Secretary shall  
22 award grant funds under subsection (b) in accordance  
23 with the following:

24 (1) FORMULA FOR ALLOTMENT.—Not later  
25 than 30 days before the start of each program year,

1 the Secretary shall establish a formula to determine  
2 the allotment amounts for each program year for the  
3 grant that—

4 (A) is based on the population of the State  
5 and the number of apprentices whose primary  
6 residence is in the State as compared to the  
7 population of every other State and number of  
8 apprentices whose primary residence is in any  
9 other State;

10 (B) is based on the number of new appren-  
11 tices whose primary residence is in the State as  
12 compared to the number of new apprentices  
13 whose primary residence is in any other State;  
14 and

15 (C) subject to available appropriations,  
16 provides that each of the several States of the  
17 United States and the District of Columbia  
18 shall not be allotted less than \$1,000,000 for  
19 each program year.

20 (2) AWARD AMOUNT.—Subject to paragraph  
21 (3), the Secretary shall award each State an amount  
22 for a program year equal to the sum of—

23 (A) half of the amount allotted to the  
24 State under the formula established under  
25 paragraph (1) for the program year;

1 (B) an amount (not more than the amount  
2 described in subparagraph (A)) equal to the  
3 matching amount in the notice submitted by the  
4 State under subsection (e); and

5 (C) if the matching amount of the State is  
6 equal to the amount described in subparagraph  
7 (A), the proportional amount for the State as  
8 determined under paragraph (4).

9 (3) DEDUCTION FOR DELAYED RESPONSES FOR  
10 REGISTERING APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS.—

11 (A) DETERMINATION OF DELAY.—The  
12 Secretary shall determine the average complete  
13 program standards response time and the aver-  
14 age incomplete program standards response  
15 time of each State that—

16 (i) receives a grant under this section;

17 and

18 (ii) registers registered apprenticeship  
19 programs in the State through a State ap-  
20 prenticeship agency.

21 (B) DEDUCTION.—For each such State in  
22 which the Secretary under subparagraph (A)  
23 determines the average complete program  
24 standards response time is more than 90 days  
25 in a program year or the average incomplete

1 program standards response time is more than  
2 30 days in a program year, the Secretary shall  
3 deduct a percentage of the award amount under  
4 paragraph (2) for the next program year that  
5 is—

6 (i) equal to half of the sum of—

7 (I) the number of days of the av-  
8 erage complete program standards re-  
9 sponse time minus 90; and

10 (II) the number of days of the  
11 average incomplete program standards  
12 response time minus 30; but

13 (ii) not more than 20.

14 (C) AVERAGE RESPONSE TIME.—

15 (i) DEFINITIONS.—For purposes of  
16 this paragraph:

17 (I) AVERAGE COMPLETE PRO-  
18 GRAM STANDARDS RESPONSE TIME.—

19 The term “average complete program  
20 standards response time” means the  
21 average number of days between the  
22 State receiving a complete program  
23 standards package by a program seek-  
24 ing to be a registered apprenticeship  
25 program and the State apprenticeship

1 agency of the State providing an ap-  
2 proval or a denial with suggestive ac-  
3 tion.

4 (II) AVERAGE INCOMPLETE PRO-  
5 GRAM STANDARDS RESPONSE TIME.—  
6 The term “average incomplete pro-  
7 gram standards response time” means  
8 the average number of days between  
9 the State receiving an incomplete pro-  
10 gram standards package by a program  
11 seeking to be a registered apprentice-  
12 ship program and the State appren-  
13 ticeship agency of the State providing  
14 a response with suggestive action.

15 (III) COMPLETE PROGRAM  
16 STANDARDS PACKAGE; INCOMPLETE  
17 PROGRAM STANDARDS PACKAGE.—  
18 The terms “complete program stand-  
19 ards package” and “incomplete pro-  
20 gram standards package” have the  
21 meanings given the terms “complete  
22 program standards” and “incomplete  
23 program standards”, respectively, in  
24 section 4 of the Act of August 16,  
25 1937 (commonly known as the “Na-

1 tional Apprenticeship Act”; 50 Stat.  
2 664, chapter 663; 29 U.S.C. 50 et  
3 seq.).

4 (IV) SUGGESTIVE ACTION.—The  
5 term “suggestive action” means, with  
6 respect to program standards sub-  
7 mitted by a program to a State ap-  
8 prenticeship agency to be a registered  
9 apprenticeship program, a response by  
10 the State apprenticeship agency to  
11 such program standards that is not  
12 an approval of the program standards  
13 and provides clear instructions to the  
14 sponsor of the program on how the  
15 program standards should be changed  
16 to conform with the requirements for  
17 registration as a registered appren-  
18 ticeship program.

19 (ii) RULES OF INTERPRETATION.—

20 (I) DENIAL WITHOUT SUGGES-  
21 TIVE ACTION.—For purposes of deter-  
22 mining average complete program  
23 standards response time, a denial  
24 without providing suggestive action

1 shall not be interpreted to stop or  
2 pause the determination.

3 (II) INQUIRES ON REGISTRA-  
4 TION.—For purposes of determining  
5 average complete program standards  
6 response time and average incomplete  
7 program standards response time, an  
8 inquiry by a program to a State ap-  
9 prenticeship agency regarding the reg-  
10 istration process that does not provide  
11 program standards documentation  
12 shall not be considered a submission  
13 of program standards.

14 (4) PROPORTIONAL AMOUNT OF ALLOTTED BUT  
15 UNAWARDED FUNDS.—

16 (A) IN GENERAL.—Not less than 15 days  
17 before the start of each program year, the Sec-  
18 retary shall, for purposes of paragraph (2)(C),  
19 determine the proportional amount, as relevant,  
20 for each State that provides a matching amount  
21 under subsection (e) that is equal to the  
22 amount described in paragraph (2)(A) for the  
23 State for the program year.

24 (B) PROPORTIONAL AMOUNT.—The pro-  
25 portional amount for a State for a program

1           year is an amount that bears the same ratio to  
2           the amount of allotted but unawarded funds for  
3           the program year as the amount allotted to the  
4           State under the formula established under  
5           paragraph (1) for the program year bears to  
6           the total amount of funds allotted to all States  
7           under the formula for the program year.

8                   (C)    ALLOTTED    BUT    UNAWARDED  
9           FUNDS.—The amount of allotted but  
10          unawarded funds for the program year is an  
11          amount equal to the total amount allotted  
12          under paragraph (1) for the program year  
13          minus the total amounts determined under sub-  
14          paragraphs (A) and (B) of paragraph (2) for all  
15          States for the program year.

16          (d) ACTIVITIES.—A State shall use amounts awarded  
17          under subsection (b) to—

18                  (1) provide technical assistance to existing and  
19          prospective sponsors of registered apprenticeship  
20          programs;

21                  (2) fund the training of apprentices, including  
22          by paying the wages of an apprentice;

23                  (3) fund outreach activities to increase aware-  
24          ness of registered apprenticeship programs and pro-  
25          vide information on how to register an existing

1 training program as a registered apprenticeship pro-  
2 gram; and

3 (4) provide financial incentives, including  
4 through pay-for-performance funding models, to at-  
5 tract employer investment in registered apprentice-  
6 ship programs.

7 (e) NOTICE OF MATCHING AMOUNT BY STATES.—

8 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not less than 30 days before  
9 the start of each program year, a State seeking a  
10 grant under subsection (b) shall submit a notice to  
11 the Secretary of the amount the State intends to  
12 provide for the program year to match the amount  
13 provided through the grant, including proof of re-  
14 sources for the matching amount.

15 (2) LIMIT TO MATCHING AMOUNT.—The match-  
16 ing amount in a notice under paragraph (1) may not  
17 be more than half of the amount allotted to the  
18 State for the program year under the formula estab-  
19 lished under subsection (c)(1).

20 (f) STATES WITHOUT A STATE APPRENTICESHIP  
21 AGENCY.—A State that does not have a State apprentice-  
22 ship agency shall designate an agency of the State govern-  
23 ment for purposes of communications with the Secretary  
24 regarding the grant program under this section.

1 (g) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATION.—There is  
2 authorized to be appropriated to carry out the grant pro-  
3 gram under this section \$150,000,000 for fiscal year 2027  
4 and for each fiscal year thereafter.

5 (h) SUPPLEMENT NOT SUPPLANT.—Funds available  
6 for use under subsection (d) shall supplement and not sup-  
7 plant other State or local public funds expended that sat-  
8 isfy the activities under such subsection.

9 **SEC. 5. POSTING RECIPROCITY REQUIREMENTS.**

10 The Act of August 16, 1937 (commonly known as  
11 the “National Apprenticeship Act”; 50 Stat. 664, chapter  
12 663; 29 U.S.C. 50 et seq.), as amended by sections 2 and  
13 3, is further amended by adding at the end of section 4  
14 of such Act (as added by section 2) the following:

15 “(4) DISCLOSURE OF RECIPROCITY REQUIRE-  
16 MENTS.—Each State apprenticeship agency shall  
17 make publicly available online the process used by  
18 the State apprenticeship agency in the State of the  
19 agency for registering under this Act an apprentice-  
20 ship program that has been otherwise registered  
21 under this Act by the Secretary or another State ap-  
22 prenticeship agency as a registered apprenticeship  
23 program in another State.”.

1 **SEC. 6. POSTING STATE APPRENTICESHIP STANDARDS.**

2 The Act of August 16, 1937 (commonly known as  
3 the “National Apprenticeship Act”; 50 Stat. 664, chapter  
4 663; 29 U.S.C. 50 et seq.), as so amended, is further  
5 amended by adding at the end of section 4 of such Act  
6 (as added by section 2) the following:

7 “(5) DISCLOSURE OF STATE APPRENTICESHIP  
8 STANDARDS.—Each State apprenticeship agency  
9 shall make publicly available online information, as  
10 required by the Secretary, on apprenticeship stand-  
11 ards in such State, including—

12 “(A) State minimum wage requirements;

13 “(B) State safety standards; and

14 “(C) instructions for properly completing  
15 documentation for proof of compliance with  
16 program standards pertaining to on-the-job  
17 training and related technical instruction re-  
18 quirements.”.