



## NATIONAL SKILLS COALITION

Every worker. Every industry. A strong economy.

## E-News.

July 26, 2010

### The View from Washington



[Watch](#) as National Skills Coalition Federal Policy Director Rachel Gragg discusses the latest developments in Washington and in the states to ensure that every worker and every industry gains the skills to compete and prosper in today's economy.

House Passes SECTORS Act with Bi-Partisan Support, Job Training Key to Short- and Long-Term Recovery  
On July 19, the House of Representatives [passed](#) the SECTORS Act on a unanimous [voice vote](#), with Members on both sides of the aisle recognizing the need to address skill mismatches in the labor market both as part of a short-term economic recovery strategy and for the nation's long-term ability to maintain its position as a global leader. The bill's passage generated significant [coverage in the press](#), demonstrating that investing in the skills of America's workers and industries is an issue that cuts across party lines.

The [SECTORS Act](#) was developed by National Skills Coalition with state and national partners, and lead sponsors Representatives Loeb sack (D-IA) and Platts (R-PA) in the House and Senators Brown (D-OH), Murray (D-WA) and Snowe (R-ME) in the Senate. Co-sponsored by 20 Representatives and 6 Senators, and endorsed by 172 [organizations](#), including 78 [employers](#), the bill allows businesses, unions, the public workforce system, and education and training providers to develop and implement plans that target job training at the current and anticipated skill needs of industries within a geographic region. [Read](#) an op-ed from Minnesota manufacturer Eric Ajax about the importance of the SECTORS Act to his business and state. [Read](#) other media coverage.

New Study Demonstrates Success of Sectors Strategy  
[Public/Private Ventures'](#) new study—[Tuning In to Local Labor Markets: Findings From the Sectoral Employment Impact Study](#)—provides strong evidence in support of sector partnerships as an innovative workforce strategy to train workers for skilled positions and connect them with employers seeking to fill such vacancies. Findings from the [Sectoral Employment Impact Study](#) show that program participants earned about \$4,500—18 percent—more than the control group over the course of the two-year study period and were more likely to find employment and work more consistently.

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## Skills2Compete-Massachusetts Launches Campaign

With the support of business, labor, and education leaders, Skills2Compete-Massachusetts [launched](#) this month with the release of [Massachusetts' Forgotten Middle-Skill Jobs](#). The study received widespread coverage by the media, with articles appearing in the [Associated Press](#) and [Boston Globe](#). The campaign is calling on state leaders to embrace a [strong vision](#) to guide an economic and education strategy that would allow all residents to improve their skills. During a press conference on the report release, coalition member



Tim Sullivan, Director of Communications and Government Relations for the Massachusetts AFL-CIO, said, *"For a long time ... those of us in labor, have felt that the economy was going to continue to trend towards kind of a polarization, where you have high-skill jobs with high wages for those people who are fortunate enough to seek higher education and attain a four-year degree or a masters or even higher, and then there would be nothing left but low-skill, low-wage jobs...this report states very, very clearly that that is not the case."*

Suzanne Bruhn, Senior Vice President of Strategic Planning and Program Management for Shire Pharmaceutical confirmed the demand for middle-skill workers in her industry. *"The biotech sector is growing rapidly, and finding qualified employees remains a challenge,"* she said *"As part of our manufacturing facility expansion here in Massachusetts, we plan to hire around 600 employees, many for positions that do not require four-year degrees."* [Learn more](#) about the campaign, read media coverage, and listen to a press conference with leaders from the labor, community college, and business communities.

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## Shifting Gears Releases Paper on Workforce Data Quality Initiative

The Joyce Foundation's [Shifting Gears Initiative](#) released a [new paper](#)—*Using State Data to Promote Continuous Improvement of Workforce Programs: Guidance for States Preparing Applications to the U.S. DOL Workforce Data Quality Initiative*—offering specific suggestions to state workforce agencies for incorporating the widest range of workers and education and training providers into their WDQI proposals.

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## La Raza Holds First-Ever Workforce Conference

[Register](#) today for [National Council of La Raza's](#) (NCLR) Workforce Development Conference October 13-14 in Chicago to learn about effective programs and policies that are helping Latino workers succeed in today's labor market and prepare for the jobs of tomorrow. Got an innovative program or strategy to share? Be sure to submit your [workshop proposal](#) by the August 1 deadline!

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