

Subj: **NVC 020414 Administration's Job Training Study**  
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**NAEPDC**  
*News, Views, and Clues*  
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**Administration's Job Training Study**

*Below is a Wall Street Journal piece via FritzWire regarding the Administration's intent to take a look at job training programs across federal agencies with the intent to reduce duplication and streamline access.*

**Biden's 47 Job-Training Flavors by Congress John Kline**

An op-ed in the Wall Street Journal

Why not a single program that measures success by workers hired?

President Obama last week asked Joe Biden to lead "an across-the-board reform" of federal job training that roots out ineffective and redundant programs. It's nice to hear the President admit that some government programs are wasteful, and if he's serious the spadework has already been done.

Job-training programs originated during the New Deal, expanded under the Great Society and have continued to proliferate despite widespread recognition that they do little good. Since 2011 the Government Accountability Office has issued four reports on job training that have echoed the conclusions of studies in the 1990s, 2000 and 2003: There are too many programs and too little accountability.

In 2011 the GAO identified no fewer than 47 training programs across nine agencies that cost \$18 billion in 2009. Almost all overlapped with at least one other. Staff at the House Education and Workforce Committee, which has conducted seven hearings on job training since 2011, say the GAO left out nine programs including one that the Obama Administration has since added. And last week the President proposed still another in the form of a grant competition for community colleges.

GAO concluded that only five of the 47 programs it examined "had impact studies that assess whether the program is responsible for improved employment outcomes," and the positive effects of those five "tended to be small, inconclusive, or restricted to short-term impacts." One of the least cost-effective is the Job Corps, which is one of the largest in taxpayer dollars per capita.

In 2012 Senator Tom Coburn's office examined workforce training in Oklahoma and found that Job Corps spends \$76,000 per participant to place youth in jobs that are often minimum-wage and don't require training. Culinary students have been put to work as funeral attendants, tour guides, baggage porters and telemarketers.

According to the Coburn report, Job Corps centers run intramural basketball and softball teams. A brochure for the Guthrie, Oklahoma, Job Corps boasts about recreational trips that include "horseback riding, bowling, movies, museums, golf at a local golf course, rodeos, go-cart rides, miniature golf, and other activities around the Oklahoma area." Where can we sign up? By the way, Jobs Corps needed a "budget transfer" (i.e., bailout) in 2011 because it ran over its budget.

A 2011 Coburn report highlighted dozens of examples of fraud and abuse. The Montana AFL-CIO spent four times as much on staff salaries as training. The Tampa Bay WorkForce Alliance directors charged taxpayers \$8,138 for a soiree at the Sheraton Riverwalk Hotel; \$451.40 for Edible Arrangements; and \$161.25 for 215 varieties of cupcakes, among other extravagances. Officials in Portage County, Ohio, spent \$42,000 on swag and XBox 360s.

Much of the lack of accountability stems from expanding bureaucracy. State and local Workforce Investment Boards that oversee programs often include upward of 40 members due to federal requirements and are too large to exercise meaningful oversight. Responsibility is diffuse. The most active board members are often officials from unions that are big recipients of job-training cash and thus have a vested interest in the status quo.

Another problem is that most programs aren't required to track results by the number and quality of jobs placed. This makes it impossible to compare efficacy and "concentrate funding on proven programs," as Mr. Obama urged in his State of the Union. Most funding allocations are determined by federal formulas that only consider enrollment.

The President said he's asked Mr. Biden to review the programs because he "can't wait for" Republicans in Congress, but Republicans are way ahead of him. Nearly a year ago the House passed legislation with comprehensive reforms, which South Carolina Republican Tim Scott introduced in the Senate last month.

The House Skills Act would consolidate 35 overlapping programs and essentially block-grant job training dollars to the states. Most federal mandates dictating the composition of Workforce Investment Boards would be eliminated save for one requiring that two-thirds be employers—that is, the people who hire workers. The legislation would also standardize seven "performance metrics," which would include training-related jobs.

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