The Trade Adjustment Assistance Enhancement Act of 2015

The Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) Enhancement Act of 2015 reestablishes the TAA programs in effect as of December 31, 2013, and extends the program through June 30, 2021. TAA currently applies only to trade-affected production sector workers, and only if those jobs were moved overseas to a country with which we have a free-trade agreement. **By reestablishing the program as of 2013, this bill will make eligible for TAA service sector workers and workers affected by offshoring or outsourcing to countries like China or India.** Extending TAA ensures that the program's training and reemployment benefits remain accessible and flexible. It also continues accountability measures and the streamlining of TAA programs. Key provisions of this TAA extension bill are set out below:

Maintains and Expands Eligibility Requirements

- ***Provides TAA benefits to service sector workers and firms.*** The bill ensures that workers and firms in both the service and manufacturing sectors are eligible for TAA. It also offers the same coverage to secondary workers in those sectors.
- ***Covers workers whose firms shift production to non-FTA partner countries.*** The bill ensures that workers whose firms shift production to any country, including China or India – not just countries with which the United States has free trade agreements – are eligible for TAA.
- ***Provides TAA coverage for U.S. suppliers of component parts.*** The bill ensures that workers at firms supplying component parts to other firms are eligible for TAA without requiring TAA certification for the firm that buys the component parts. It maintains coverage for firms that petition for TAA benefits if they supply component parts to foreign customers and their customers switch to component parts made outside the United States.
- ***Ensures automatic eligibility for workers suffering from unfair trade and import surges.*** Unfair foreign subsidies, the dumping of foreign goods, and unexpected import surges can harm U.S. industries and affect jobs in those sectors. The bill ensures that workers in such industries will automatically be eligible to receive TAA benefits if their layoffs occurred within one year before or after an affirmative injury determination by the International Trade Commission.

Invests in American Workers

- ***Provides a $450 million investment to train workers.*** The bill authorizes $450 million annually for fiscal years 2015-2021, ensuring states have ample funding to provide long-term job training.
- ***Gives flexible training options and up to 130 weeks of training.*** The bill ensures training for up to 117 weeks, giving all workers the opportunity to receive long-term training, and provides an additional 13 weeks of training for workers completing a degree or an industry-recognized credential. TAA allows various training options, including opportunities for part-time and pre-layoff training.
- ***Provides accessible wage insurance that works with other benefits.*** For workers who seek quick re-employment, TAA provides wage insurance – 50 percent of the wage differential between the old job and the new job, up to $10,000 – to workers 50 years of age or older. The bill ensures workers have the ability to switch from trade readjustment allowances (TRAs) to wage insurance payments at any time during their training. A worker who completes training and is reemployed is eligible to receive reemployment TAA benefits in lieu of TRA benefits for the remainder of the worker's TRA eligibility.

Service and Outreach to Workers in Transition

- ***Provides eligibility protections for Americans on active duty military service.*** The bill maintains protection for workers called up for active duty military or full-time National Guard service and allows them to restart their TAA enrollment process after completing such service.

- ***Reestablishes clarity in enrollment deadlines and ensures fairness.*** Workers are currently required to enroll in training within 8 weeks of certification or 16 weeks of layoffs. This bill simplifies the application process by allowing workers to enroll in training within 26 weeks after layoff or certification, whichever is later.
- ***Provides funding to help state caseworkers counsel TAA clients.*** The bill ensures that not less than five percent of the training funds allocated to states are used for case management services, allowing states to provide proper assessment, career counseling, and other case management services.

Helps Small Businesses and Farmers

- ***Provides assistance to small businesses.*** The TAA for Firms program helps small businesses adjust to foreign competition and create new jobs by providing assistance to improve their competitiveness. The bill authorizes $16 million annually for the program, which helps small businesses that are able to show a decline in sales or production over one, two, or three years.
- ***Provides benefits and technical assistance to farmers and fishermen.*** The bill provides targeted training to farmers and fishermen and clarifies that fishermen and aquaculture producers may receive TAA benefits whether they are competing against farmed or wild-caught fish or seafood imports. Producers who complete the training phases become eligible for up to $12,000 in seed money to use their new skills and implement a business plan. The TAA for Farmers and Fishermen Program is authorized at $90 million.

Streamlines Programs and Improves Accountability

- ***Consolidates and streamlines administrative program costs****.* The bill continues the consolidation of administration, case management, job search, and relocation funding under the training fund cap. It eliminates separate funding streams, while allowing states more flexibility to use a portion of the training funds for administration and case management costs. States must prioritize these funds for training and case management, but administrative costs are capped at 11.5% percent of the funds. States can also use these funds to pay for 90 percent of the cost of job search and relocation, up to $1,250.
- ***Updates performance measures*** as requested in the President's budget, in order to conform with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014.