national coalition for WOMEN and GIRLS in EDUCATION

NEWS RELEASE

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Bipartisan PACT Act will strengthen families and the economy

WASHINGTON, DC -- The Pathways Advancing Career Training (PACT) Act was introduced in the House of Representatives on October 6 by Congresswomen Melissa Hart (R-4th PA) and Juanita Millender-McDonald (D-37th CA). The Act (H.R. 3972) provides funding for education and training programs that help displaced homemakers, single parents and individuals pursuing nontraditional occupations enter and advance in careers that provide economic self-sufficiency for themselves and their families. When individuals have access to job training, especially in nontraditional and high-skill fields, they are able to get well-paying jobs, support their families, build local tax bases and increase revenue for local businesses and government.

Legislators from both sides of the aisle agree that job training helps build stronger families and a stronger economy by moving job seekers into the paid workforce. Job training has been found to increase wages, improve access to jobs with employer-paid benefits, and increase entry into steady work, according to a recent study conducted by the Workforce Alliance.

"Job training and education programs across the country have demonstrated their success," said Lisa Maatz, Director of Public Policy and Government Relations at the American Association of University Women and Chair of the National Coalition for Women and Girls in Education.

Pennsylvania programs have reported success rates of 80% or higher. In Oregon, the employment and wages of program graduates have increased every year, and participants in Florida secured jobs that helped them double their annual incomes. These achievements have in turn provided great benefits to the government and taxpayers. Pennsylvania programs alone saved the government $3 million in one year from reduction in public assistance and increased revenues from contributions of new wage-earners.

"With training to compete for well-paying jobs, the wages that women earn have a multiplier effect in their local communities," explained Jill Miller, CEO and President of Women Work! The National Network for Women's Employment. "As tax-paying citizens these women contribute to the local tax base, as consumers they contribute to the local economy, and as economically-independent heads of household they provide a positive role model for their children."

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Despite their demonstrated results, at current funding levels career training programs are unable to meet the needs of the approximately 15 million displaced homemakers and single mothers in the United States. The PACT Act provides flexible funding to states, allowing states to best meet the needs of local labor markets. Coordinated performance accountability measures ensure that PACT Act resources are used efficiently.

By supporting programs, "the PACT Act provides real assistance to single mothers who face especially steep obstacles," said Congresswoman Hart. "This is critical because single mothers often not only have to acquire the skills needed to enter a workforce that has changed since they were last employed, but they also have to worry about finding and paying for day care for their children, working around school schedules and fitting in other everyday chores, such as grocery shopping and helping with homework."

"The PACT Act provides critical funding to education and job training programs that have demonstrated nationwide success in helping women and single mothers succeed in our highly skilled, information technology economy," said Congresswoman Millender-McDonald. The PACT act also benefits American businesses by matching employers with the skilled workers they need to prosper. According to Millender-McDonald, "U.S. employers are already lacking trained workers to fill their skilled labor requirements. The PACT Act helps to fill this gap and ensures that America's workers are prepared to meet the demands of the 21st century."

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The National Coalition for Women and Girls in Education (NCWGE) was formed in 1975 by representatives of national organizations concerned about the failure to issue regulations implementing Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. NCWGE was successful in mobilizing strong support for publication of the Title IX regulations by the then Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. NCWGE continues to be a major force in developing national education policies that benefit all women and girls, and provides a valuable forum to share information and strategies to advance educational equity. NCWGE advocates for women's and girls' interests on issues regarding Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and monitors federal agencies' implementation of federal education programs.

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