

115TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 1534

To establish a program that provides dislocated workers with a subsidy or coupon that may be applied towards obtaining broadband Internet access service, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 15, 2017

Mrs. DINGELL introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Education and the Workforce, and in addition to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To establish a program that provides dislocated workers with a subsidy or coupon that may be applied towards obtaining broadband Internet access service, 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 “21st Century Worker
5 Opportunity Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. BROADBAND SERVICE FOR DISPLACED WORKERS**
2 **PROGRAM.**

3 (a) CREATION OF PROGRAM.—Not later than one
4 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the As-
5 sistant Secretary shall implement and administer a pro-
6 gram that provides displaced workers with a subsidy or
7 coupon for a lump sum payment of \$500 that may only
8 be applied towards—

- 9 (1) obtaining broadband Internet access service;
10 or
11 (2) remote job training in a profession not like-
12 ly to be automated in the next 20 years.

13 (b) PROGRAM SPECIFICATIONS.—

14 (1) ELIGIBILITY.—To be eligible to receive a
15 subsidy or coupon under the program, a displaced
16 worker who has been laid off or terminated shall
17 submit to the Assistant Secretary a certification
18 from an employer that the worker was employed in
19 the manufacturing sector and was laid off or termi-
20 nated due to the automation of the position of the
21 worker.

22 (2) LIMITATIONS.—

23 (A) ONE PER HOUSEHOLD.—Not more
24 than one request per household to receive a
25 subsidy or coupon may be made under the pro-
26 gram.

1 (B) NO COMBINATION OF SUBSIDY OR
2 COUPON.—A subsidy or coupon distributed
3 under the program may not be combined with
4 any other subsidy or coupon distributed under
5 the program.

6 (c) REPORTS REQUIRED.—Not later than June 30
7 and December 31 of each year, the Inspector General of
8 the Department of Commerce and the Comptroller Gen-
9 eral shall submit to the committees on Energy and Com-
10 merce of the House of Representatives and Commerce,
11 Science, and Transportation of the Senate a report for the
12 previous 6 months that reviews the program established
13 under subsection (a). Such report shall include any rec-
14 ommendations to address waste, fraud, and abuse.

15 (d) RULEMAKING.—Not later than 180 days after the
16 date of the enactment of this Act, the Assistant Secretary
17 shall promulgate regulations to implement this section, in-
18 cluding methods to reduce waste, fraud, and abuse within
19 the program.

20 (e) CONSUMER AWARENESS CAMPAIGN.—Not later
21 than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act,
22 the Assistant Secretary shall launch a consumer aware-
23 ness campaign about the program established under this
24 Act.

25 (f) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

1 (1) ASSISTANT SECRETARY.—The term “Assist-
2 ant Secretary” means the Assistant Secretary of
3 Commerce for Communications and Information.

4 (2) AUTOMATION.—The term “automation”
5 means the introduction of machinery into any enter-
6 prise that is intended to, or has the effect of, replac-
7 ing human labor.

8 (3) BROADBAND INTERNET ACCESS SERVICE.—
9 The term “broadband Internet access service” has
10 the meaning given that term in section 8.2 of title
11 47, Code of Federal Regulations.

12 (4) DISPLACED WORKER.—The term “displaced
13 worker” means an individual who, due to automa-
14 tion, has been terminated or laid off from employ-
15 ment, or who has received a notice of termination or
16 layoff from employment.

17 (g) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—

18 (1) PROGRAM.—There is authorized to be ap-
19 propriated \$5,000,000,000 for the program estab-
20 lished under this Act, of which not more than 5 per-
21 cent is authorized for administrative expenses.

22 (2) INSPECTOR GENERAL.—There is authorized
23 to be appropriated \$100,000,000 to the Inspector
24 General of the Department of Commerce.

1 (3) CONSUMER AWARENESS CAMPAIGN.—There
2 is authorized to be appropriated \$50,000,000 for the
3 consumer awareness campaign described under sub-
4 section (e).

○