

New Workforce Training Integrates Libraries as Partners

By Rep. Rush Holt
Congressman for The 12th District

Sixteen years ago, the Workforce Investment Act was signed into law to ensure job seekers could access trainings necessary to develop their skills in ways that matched employers' needs. This federally-supported job training and job search assistance had previously only been available in New Jersey's 30 One-Stop Career Centers located across our 21 counties. It was a good bill, but it was never reauthorized or brought up to date until last week. The 1998 version of the law did not mention computers, and it did not include libraries.

In 2012, I visited the East Brunswick Public Library to announce the Workforce Investment through Local Libraries (WILL) Act, legislation I introduced to include public libraries in these job training efforts. Libraries are often the first places Americans go to for skill development and job search assistance, and particularly in New Jersey, libraries and librarians have been leading this effort to help job seekers. According to a recent survey, 95 percent of our libraries already help people access and use employment resources, including assistance with job searches, creating resumes, and submitting employment applications.

This week, I returned to the East Brunswick Library to join state and

national library advocates in celebrating the new workforce training law that I helped write. The new law integrates local libraries as full partners in the nation's One-Stop system, providing funding to support job search services at the more than 300 libraries in our state. Libraries now may be paid for what they have already been doing, and job seekers will benefit from expanded and improved job search services.

Facts vs. Rhetoric

For the past five years, Republican rhetoric on the Affordable Care Act (ACA) declared that the ACA has ruined our healthcare system. Republican Members of Congress bemoaned these reforms, as if the old healthcare system that kicked people off insurance after reaching an arbitrary spending cap or denied coverage to individuals with pre-existing conditions was a system worth keeping. Paul Krugman recently described this effort in *The New York Times*.

In reality, the ACA has successfully improved our healthcare system. For example, Medicare spending since the passage of the ACA, adjusting for inflation, has been flat or negative. So while our economy has expanded, spending on healthcare has actually declined and now the Medicare trust fund will be solvent for five additional years.

The Department of Health and Human Services reported over 8.2 million seniors have saved more than \$11.5 billion on prescription drugs. Additionally, 42,000 New Jerseyans will be receiving a total of \$3.4 million in refunds this year from insurance companies who had overcharged them for their healthcare.

The facts show that healthcare reform is working. We can build on these successes to improve healthcare for all Americans.

Working for You

Recently, I was contacted by a constituent who found himself without a valid Passport just days before scheduled travel despite having applied in advance to renew his Passport. When I inquired with the National Passport Center (NPC), I discovered they had misplaced documents the constituent had previously submitted. At my request, the NPC expedited the passport renewal and agreed to waive the fees associated. I am happy to report that the constituent received his renewed Passport the following day and was able to make his trip.

If you are experiencing issues with the federal government and you think I can help, please contact me by calling 1-87-RUSH-HOLT.

Assembly Passes Bail Reform, Pretrial Bills

TRENTON — The State Assembly on Monday granted final legislative approval to bipartisan legislation that will overhaul the criminal justice process in New Jersey by creating a fairer bail system.

The measure, S-946/A-1910, would reform the way in which bail and pretrial release determinations are made; provide courts with the authority to deny pretrial release; establish speedy trial deadlines; and authorize the judiciary to revise fees to help fund a pretrial risk assessment and monitoring program, legal services for the poor and other court-related programs and services. The bill was sent to the Governor's desk.

"We cannot afford to allow the current system to continue," said Annette Quijano (D-20th, Elizabeth). "There is near universal agreement that it doesn't work. We see violent repeat offenders back on our streets too soon, while others wait in jail for months on end for their trial. Common sense reform like this is very clearly needed."

Also passed on Monday was SCR-128, which would authorize a court, under certain circumstances, to order the pretrial detention of a person in a criminal case by changing the current constitutional right to bail. The question will be appear on the November General Election ballot.

"I am glad the Senate and Assembly have approved virtually the same legislation I sponsored in June, 2012 that will keep violent people

off the street. This amendment is a common sense measure that will help protect the public. The safety and welfare of our citizens is one of the most important responsibilities for legislators. There are too many instances of violent offenders released on bail who continue to be a menace to society. With the overwhelming support of the Legislature and the public, I am confident this question will be approved in November and our communities will become safer," Assemblywoman Donna Simon (R-16th, Flemington) said.

Assemblywoman Mary Pat Angelini (R-11th, Ocean), whose husband is a former detective, said, "By providing judges with an option to deny bail to the most ruthless, dangerous criminals, we can stop a cycle of violence and bloodshed that has become all too common."

The Senate passed both pieces of legislation on Thursday.

Eck Accepts Invitation To Debate on Sept. 18th

REGION — Alieta Eck has accepted the invitation of The League of Women Voters of Hopewell Valley to their Thursday, September 18 congressional debate. Dr. Eck has called on her opponent, Assemblywoman Bonnie Watson-Coleman (D-15th, Mercer) to also accept the invitation to debate the pressing issues facing the voters of New Jersey's 12th Congressional District.

"Residents of the 12th district are entitled to hear from the candidates about our views on the important issues facing the nation. Obamacare is hurting working families, our friends and neighbors are out of work, and we face renewed violence in the Middle East. Just as I am discussing solutions to these issues every day with Central New Jersey voters, I look forward to discussing them with Assemblywoman Watson-Coleman in public forum on September 18th," the candidate said.

The League of Women Voters debate will be held on at 7:30 p.m. at

Har Sinai Temple, located officially at 2431 Pennington Road in Pennington. The debate will be videotaped by George McCollough of Princeton Community TV. The video will be made available to media and will be posted on League websites. The collaboration among the three leagues and Princeton TV encompasses the western edge of the 12th Congressional District.

Dr. Eck is a graduate of the St. Louis University School of Medicine and a private practitioner in Piscataway since 1988, has been involved in health care reform since residency and realizes that the government is a poor provider of medical care.

In 2003, she and her husband founded a free clinic for the poor and uninsured that currently cares for 300 to 400 patients per month utilizing the donated services of volunteer physicians and nurses. In 2004, she testified before the Joint Economic Committee of Congress about better ways to deliver health care in the United States. Dr. Eck is the 2012 past president of the Association of American Physicians and Surgeons. In addition, she serves on the board of Christian Care Medi-Share, a faith-based medical cost sharing ministry, and she is also a member of Zarephath Christian Church. Alieta and her husband have five children, one of whom is a physician in ophthalmology training in St. Louis, Mo.

Senators Applaud Passage Of VA Reforms Bill

NUTLEY — U.S. Senators Robert Menendez and Cory Booker (both D-N.J.) last Thursday met with New Jersey military veterans and applauded the reforms passed by Congress to restore accountability within the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and increase health care access for veterans.

"The bipartisan Veterans' bill we passed yesterday (July 31) in Congress is an essential step forward," Sen. Menendez said. "Our brave men and women did not wait to sign up to serve this country, and they should not have to wait to get the benefits they have earned defending it. I will continue to closely monitor the ongoing investigations at VA hospitals serving New Jersey veterans to make absolutely certain that they will be able to access the quality care they need and deserve."

"Our brave men and women in the service were willing to put their lives on the line for our country. It's not an option — it's our obligation — to take care of them when they return home," Sen. Booker said. "This comprehensive legislation ensures that veterans can see a doctor more quickly and veterans with severe brain injuries continue to get the critical care they need."

The Veterans' Access to Care

through Choice, Accountability, and Transparency Act is designed to help fix some of the issues arising from the scandal at the Phoenix, Ariz. Veterans' Affairs facility and address the problem of long patient wait times at Veterans Healthcare Facilities across the country.

The legislation provides: \$5 billion to increase access to health care by hiring more physicians and medical staff to clear the patient backlog; \$10 billion to establish a Veterans' Choice Fund to pay for eligible veterans to get private medical care; an expedited process to remove incompetent managers at the VA; authorization to construct or expand 27 VA medical facilities in 18 states and Puerto Rico, including in Brick, N.J.; extensions to pilot programs for Access Received Closer to Home (ARCH), rehabilitation, quality of life and community integration services for veterans with complex-mild-to-severe traumatic brain injury; G.I. Bill improvements through a requirement for public colleges to provide in-state tuition to veterans and eligible dependents and an expansion of full scholarships to the spouses of service members who died in the line of duty post-9/11.

Rible: Open Space Bill Bad for Taxpayers

TRENTON — Assemblyman David P. Rible (R-30th, Wall Twp.) commented on Monday's state Assembly passage of SCR-84 which dedicates a portion of revenues from the Corporation Business Tax to open space, farmland and historic land preservation.

"While I support the goal of preserving open space, the bill passed today is bad policy that will have serious ramifications on our state's finances for decades. Constitutionally dedicating more revenues for a specific purpose will only hamper our ability to fund necessary programs during the next budget cycle."

"Although open space is an important initiative, our priorities should be putting our state on sound fiscal footing and providing tax relief to all of our taxpayers. This constitutional amendment will only make our state more unaffordable for businesses and taxpayers who are desperate for tax relief."

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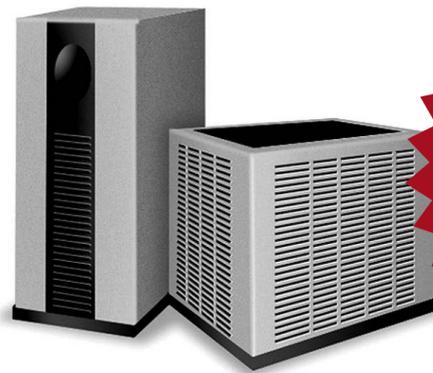
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