

1 Title: To address the workforce needs of the telecommunications industry.
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4 Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in
5 Congress assembled,

6 SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

7 This Act may be cited as the “Telecommunications Skilled Workforce Act”.

8 SEC. 2. TELECOMMUNICATIONS INTERAGENCY 9 WORKING GROUP.

10 (a) In General.—Part I of title III of the Communications Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 301 et seq.)
11 is amended by adding at the end the following:

12 “SEC. 344. TELECOMMUNICATIONS INTERAGENCY 13 WORKING GROUP.

14 “(a) Definitions.—In this section:

15 “(1) 5G.—The term ‘5G’, with respect to wireless infrastructure and wireless technology,
16 means fifth-generation wireless infrastructure and wireless technology.

17 “(2) RURAL AREA.—The term ‘rural area’ means any area other than—

18 “(A) a city, town, or incorporated area that has a population of more than 20,000
19 inhabitants; or

20 “(B) an urbanized area adjacent to a city or town that has a population of more than
21 50,000 inhabitants.

22 “(3) TELECOMMUNICATIONS INTERAGENCY WORKING GROUP.—The term
23 ‘telecommunications interagency working group’ means the interagency working group
24 established under subsection (b).

25 “(b) Establishment.—Not later than 60 days after the date of enactment of this section, the
26 Chairman of the Commission, in consultation with the Secretary of Labor, shall establish within
27 the Commission an interagency working group to develop recommendations to address the
28 workforce needs of the telecommunications industry.

29 “(c) Duties.—In developing recommendations under subsection (b), the telecommunications
30 interagency working group shall—

31 “(1) determine whether, and if so how, any Federal laws (including regulations),
32 guidance, policies, or practices, or any budgetary constraints, inhibit institutions of higher
33 education (as defined in section 101 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001))
34 or for-profit businesses from establishing, adopting, or expanding programs intended to
35 address the workforce needs of the telecommunications industry, including the workforce
36 needed to build and maintain the 5G wireless infrastructure necessary to support 5G
37 wireless technology;

1 “(2) identify potential policies and programs that could encourage and improve
2 coordination among Federal agencies, between Federal agencies and States, and among
3 States, on telecommunications workforce needs;

4 “(3) identify ways in which existing Federal programs, including programs that help
5 facilitate the employment of veterans and military personnel transitioning into civilian life,
6 could be leveraged to help address the workforce needs of the telecommunications industry;

7 “(4) identify ways to encourage individuals and for-profit businesses to participate in
8 qualified industry-led workforce development programs, including the Telecommunications
9 Industry Registered Apprenticeship Program;

10 “(5) identify ways to improve recruitment in qualified industry-led workforce
11 development programs, including the Telecommunications Industry Registered
12 Apprenticeship Program and other industry-recognized apprenticeship programs; and

13 “(6) identify Federal incentives that could be provided to institutions of higher education,
14 for-profit businesses, State workforce development boards established under section 101 of
15 the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C. 3111), or other relevant
16 stakeholders to establish or adopt programs, or expand current programs, to address the
17 workforce needs of the telecommunications industry, including such needs in rural areas.

18 “(d) Members.—The telecommunications interagency working group shall be composed of
19 representatives of such Federal agencies and relevant non-Federal industry stakeholder
20 organizations as the Chairman of the Commission, in consultation with the Secretary of Labor,
21 considers appropriate, including—

22 “(1) a representative of the Department of Education, appointed by the Secretary of
23 Education;

24 “(2) a representative of the National Telecommunications and Information
25 Administration, appointed by the Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Communications
26 and Information;

27 “(3) a representative of the Department of Commerce, appointed by the Secretary of
28 Commerce;

29 “(4) a representative of the Commission, appointed by the Chairman of the Commission;

30 “(5) a representative of the Telecommunications Industry Registered Apprenticeship
31 Program, appointed by the Secretary of Labor;

32 “(6) a representative of a telecommunications industry association, appointed by the
33 Chairman of the Commission;

34 “(7) a representative of an Indian Tribe or Tribal organization, appointed by the Secretary
35 of Labor;

36 “(8) a representative of a rural telecommunications carrier, appointed by the Chairman of
37 the Commission;

38 (9) a representative from a telecommunications contractor firm, appointed by the
39 Chairman of the Commission;

40 (10) “a representative from a minority institution (as defined in section 365 of the Higher

1 Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1067k)), appointed by the Secretary of Education” and

2 “(11) a representative from a labor organization, appointed by the Secretary of Labor.

3 “(e) Report to Congress.—Not later than 180 days after the date on which the
4 telecommunications interagency working group is established, the working group shall submit a
5 report containing recommendations to address the workforce needs of the telecommunications
6 industry to—

7 “(1) the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate;

8 “(2) the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions of the Senate;

9 “(3) the Committee on Energy and Commerce of the House of Representatives; and

10 “(4) the Committee on Education and Labor of the House of Representatives.

11 “(f) Nonapplicability of FACA.—The Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App.) shall
12 not apply to the telecommunications interagency working group.”.

13 (b) Sunset.—Section 344 of the Communications Act of 1934, as added by subsection (a),
14 shall be repealed on the day after the date on which the interagency working group established
15 under subsection (b) of that section submits the report to Congress under subsection (e) of that
16 section.

17 SEC. 3. TELECOMMUNICATIONS WORKFORCE 18 GUIDANCE.

19 Not later than 270 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Chairman of the Federal
20 Communications Commission, in consultation with the Secretary of Labor, shall establish and
21 issue guidance on how States can address the workforce needs of the telecommunications
22 industry, including guidance on how a State workforce development board established under
23 section 101 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C. 3111) can—

24 (1) utilize Federal resources available to States to meet the workforce needs of the
25 telecommunications industry; and

26 (2) promote and improve recruitment in qualified industry-led workforce development
27 programs, including the Telecommunications Industry Registered Apprenticeship Program.

28 SEC. 4. GAO ASSESSMENT OF WORKFORCE NEEDS OF 29 THE TELECOMMUNICATIONS INDUSTRY.

30 (a) Definitions.—In this section:

31 (1) 5G.—The term “5G”, with respect to wireless infrastructure and wireless technology,
32 means fifth-generation wireless infrastructure and wireless technology.

33 (2) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES.—The term “appropriate congressional
34 committees” means—

35 (A) the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate;

36 (B) the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions of the Senate;

1 (C) the Committee on Energy and Commerce of the House of Representatives; and
2 (D) the Committee on Education and Labor of the House of Representatives.

3 (3) BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE.—The term “broadband infrastructure” means any
4 buried, underground, or aerial facility, and any wireless or wireline connection, that enables
5 users to send and receive voice, video, data, graphics, or any combination thereof.

6 (b) Report.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Comptroller
7 General of the United States shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report
8 that estimates the number of skilled telecommunications workers that will be required to build
9 and maintain—

10 (1) broadband infrastructure in rural areas; and

11 (2) the 5G wireless infrastructure needed to support 5G wireless technology.
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