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ACR-50 Workforce development. (2019-2020)

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Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 50

CHAPTER 143

Relative to workforce development.

[Filed with Secretary of State September 09, 2019.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

ACR 50, Chiu. Workforce development.

This measure would state the Legislature's commitment to removing barriers and ensuring that good jobs and career pathway programs are accessible to all while promoting equity and inclusion in hiring practices. The measure would call upon the state's workforce system to improve access to workforce development for all Californians, ensure representation of impacted communities in the decisionmaking processes for developing workforce strategies, create more effective training programs for Limited English Proficient individuals, remove barriers for individuals reentering the workforce, create goals and metrics that are directly tied to improving equity and access to workforce development and quality jobs for all Californians, and build equity and accountability into our state-funded workforce development programs so that all Californians can participate meaningfully in, contribute to, and thrive in our current and future economy.

Fiscal Committee: yes

WHEREAS, California has the fifth largest economy in the world but also has the fourth highest level of income inequality in the nation; and

WHEREAS, Immigrants and workers of color have become a significant and growing portion of the United States' workforce, especially in California, where immigrants comprise more than 35 percent and workers of color comprise more than 58 percent of the state's civilian workforce. However, accessible and appropriate workforce development programs for these individuals remain scarce in our state; and

WHEREAS, California is facing record low unemployment alongside a record high number of open jobs, over one-half of which require less than a bachelor's degree, yet employers continue to extend bachelor's degree requirements to more jobs, shutting people out of current and future opportunities; and

WHEREAS, By 2025, California is projected to face a shortage of as high as 1,500,000 workers who have some postsecondary education. Many more will be shut out of job opportunities due to changing skill requirements for in-demand jobs; and

WHEREAS, Less than one-half of California's immigrants between 25 and 64 years of age have education beyond a high school degree. Only 52 percent of people of color between 25 and 64 years of age have education beyond a high school degree; and

WHEREAS, California has over 6.8 million residents who are Limited English Proficient (LEP), meaning they reported speaking English less than "very well" in the United States Census Bureau's Decennial Censuses and the American Community Surveys;

and

WHEREAS, Of the immigrant and refugee college-educated adults in California, 25 percent are underemployed or unemployed; and

WHEREAS, By 2030, people of color will make up approximately 68.8 percent of California's population; and

WHEREAS, Predictions about increased automation and technological advancement forecast that 11,000,000 entry-level workers are at risk of being displaced in the United States, impacting as many as 83 percent of jobs paying less than \$20 per hour; and

WHEREAS, Without progressive policy change to ensure that all Californians have the skills and opportunities to participate in our future economy, immigrants, refugees, and people of color will continue to bear the impact of economic inequality; and

WHEREAS, Building the skills of immigrants, refugees, and people of color is vital to meeting the demands of our changing economy and will help the state address its existing and future challenges; and

WHEREAS, California thrives because of its diverse workforce. Immigrants founded around 45 percent of all new businesses from 2007 to 2011, inclusive. More than 35 percent of small businesses are owned by people of color, and people of color represent over one-half trillion dollars in purchasing power in the state; and

WHEREAS, A diverse workforce is vital to the continued growth and success of businesses, where businesses with strong racial and ethnic diversity are 35 percent more likely to outperform their peers; and

WHEREAS, Immigrants, refugees, and people of color who are directly impacted by workforce strategies are underrepresented in the public workforce system's decisionmaking bodies; and

WHEREAS, Many LEP individuals face multiple barriers of low educational attainment and limited English proficiency, making it difficult for them to secure a job with livable wages to sustain their families and the demand for language appropriate workforce services and vocational training far exceeds availability; and

WHEREAS, Individuals reentering the workforce face discrimination in the workplace and multiple barriers to obtaining licenses and certifications, making it difficult to secure employment in jobs for which they have training and experience; and

WHEREAS, Immigrants, refugees, and people of color are underrepresented in, and face myriad barriers to, accessing job training and career pathways and these barriers include language and cultural barriers, the cost of education, transportation, childcare, discrimination, and wage inequities; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate thereof concurring, That the Legislature is committed to removing barriers and ensuring that good jobs and career pathway programs are accessible to all while promoting equity and inclusion in hiring practices; and be it further

Resolved, That the Legislature calls upon the state's workforce system to improve access to workforce development for all Californians, ensure representation of impacted communities in the decisionmaking processes for developing workforce strategies, create more effective training programs for LEP individuals, remove barriers for individuals reentering the workforce, create goals and metrics that are directly tied to improving equity and access to workforce development and quality jobs for all Californians, and build equity and accountability into our state-funded workforce development programs so that all Californians can participate meaningfully in, contribute to, and thrive in our current and future economy; and be it further

Resolved, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies of this resolution to the Governor, the Labor and Workforce Development Agency, the California Workforce Development Board, the California Community College Chancellor's Office, the Superintendent of Public Instruction, and the author for appropriate distribution.