



EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING REPORTER

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Washington, May 31, 2010

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Legislative Update

CONGRESS BANDIES UI, SUMMER JOBS FUNDS IN DOWN-TO-WIRE ACTION

At ETR deadline, the House and Senate were volleying three separate measures dealing with employment, economic security and disaster relief.

The Senate had spent the last week in May considering the Disaster Relief and Summer Jobs Act of 2010, HR 4899. This contained \$600 million for summer youth employment when it passed the House in March, though the funding was stripped from the version introduced in the Senate.

It could reappear in one of 122 amendments, most of which had not been immediately described by their sponsors, lined up for consideration. Some dealt with oil spill disaster relief.

Meanwhile, Democrats on the House and Senate tax-writing committees introduced a draft of the American Jobs and Closing Tax Loopholes Act, with a plan to introduce it as a substitute to HR 4213, a tax extender bill that was passed in different forms by both chambers earlier this year.

On May 20 their plan was to use the measure to continue enhanced and extended unemployment insurance through the end of the year; contribute \$2.5 billion to the TANF Emergency Fund, extending it through fiscal year 2011; provide \$1 billion for sum-

mer youth employment; and make adjustments to the Trade Adjustment for Communities Community College and Career Training grant program. The latter provision would provide no new funds, but would make the grant program's training available to all UI recipients, not just trade-dislocated workers.

However, late in the afternoon on May 26 plans changed, as lawmakers scaled back their continuation proposal so that UI would be extended only through November 2010, rather than the whole fiscal year. There may be more to come.

That same afternoon, House Appropriations Committee Chairman David Obey (D-Wis) unveiled a proposal, not formally introduced, for a supplemental war and disaster relief spending bill that would authorize \$83 billion for Disaster Unemployment Assistance and National Emergency Grants targeted to the Gulf Coast oil spill.

Largely a game in play with no clear call on its outcome, the only goal seemed to be recess by Memorial Day.

—Ryan Hess

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Executive Editor: CECILIO MORALES; **Senior Editor:** RYAN HESS; **Desk Editor:** LUCY W. SCOTT

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Current National Developments

Youth

JEC PROBES RECORD YOUTH JOBLESS RATE, ISSUES REPORT

Federal lawmakers upended standard hearing protocol at a May 26 Joint Economic Committee meeting on record-high unemployment of workers ages 16 to 24. The panel unveiled its own findings before witnesses testified and a member was asked to tell his hard-luck-youth story after experts expostulated.

Disproportionate

In its report *Understanding the Economy: Unemployment among Young Workers*, JEC staff pointed out that the age group hit 19.6 percent unemployment in April 2010, which they described as “the highest level for this age group since the Bureau of Labor Statistics began tracking unemployment in 1947.”

Not only that, but this age group has borne a “disproportionate” share of the unemployment since the Great Recession began, as they make up 13 percent of the workforce, but 26 percent of the unemployed.

Young workers usually have higher rates of unemployment, but their jobless spells tend to be shorter than those of older workers, JEC staff wrote, suggesting that in the present economy, however, the shorter duration “may also indicate that young workers are stopping their search for work and dropping out of the labor force.”

The report also laid bare inequalities among youths 16 to 24. While college graduates in this age group had an unemployment rate of 8.0 percent in April, those without a high school diploma experienced a jobless rate of 33 percent. Even so, JEC staff added, “the benefits of a college degree are not uniform,” as the unemployment rate for young black college graduates was 15.8 percent, or nearly double what their peers experienced.

Still, the bulk of the testimony and question-period discussion shifted focus to the larger problems of the age group.

“We’ve accepted the sky-high unemployment. We’re addressing the chronic challenges instead,” testified David Jones, chief executive officer of the Community Service Society of New York, based in Manhattan, N.Y. Jones’ organization has existed since 1848, making it one of the oldest social welfare organizations in the nation.

The CSS chief proposed a \$1.3 billion summer youth program “separate from the Workforce Investment Act.” He reasoned that “if we allow summer

jobs to be part of the WIA youth formula, then other important WIA activities, particularly those for out-of-school youth, will suffer.”

Jones lamented that activities for those youths have “decreased dramatically since the inception of WIA.”

Jones also pointed out that as bad as the labor market is for youths in general, “the situation is worse for young men, African-Americans and Latinos,” whose unemployment has soared to 23 percent, 33 percent and 24 percent, respectively.

He also described to the JEC the dropout problem over the last five years.

“At the nadir of the mid-aughts recession, New York City was facing an unprecedented and staggering number of 16- to 24-year-olds who were neither enrolled in school, nor working — nearly 200,000 in our city alone,” he testified, drawing on a 2005 CSS report. “Five years later, I have both good and bad news to report. First the good news: more young people are returning to school in New York City. Sadly, increasing school enrollment is not nearly proportionate to make up for the numbers of young people who are out of work.”

“Path Dependent”

Jones credited New York City’s relative success to a set of programs developed by the municipality’s Office of Multiple Pathways to Graduation to address the needs of over-age and undercredited high school students, who are those most at risk of dropping out.

“Why are jobs for young people important? Considerable research has shown that workforce success is ‘path-dependent,’ ” he said. “Having a job at an early age makes you more likely to have it at a later age.”

Jones pointed to Aviation High School, located in Queens, N.Y., with an annex at the John F. Kennedy International Airport. Originally a building trades school that developed into an aviation college prep school, the institution has returned to its trade and vocational roots, preparing students for technician careers in the field.

“Those grads are immediately picked up by the industry,” he said. “I’m proud of those young people, even though I come from a generation that was brought up differently. My father told me that vocational education was not for a black child, since it meant he would not be a professional.”

Columbia University economist Till von Wachter, whose research is cited in the JEC paper, pointed to

Europe for solutions, specifically to the German apprenticeship system.

He suggested that the United States adopt a requirement of education or work training until age 18. To provide an incentive to businesses, employers should be able to hire apprentices at subminimum wages, he said, which is what allows the German training to come with a job guarantee.

Responding to questions concerning the unmet labor needs of employers, von Wachter said, “The United States could handle it the way other countries do, by having more specialized degrees.”

In a vocational system that goes back to Otto von Bismarck in the 19th century, Germany has two- or three-year vocational schools known as *Berufsschulen*, which straddle the U.S. high school and early college years to prepare young people for an occupation. Beyond that are more advanced intermediate technical schools, or *Berufsaufbauschule*, similar to technical colleges, and the university level *Fachhochschulen* — all technical and occupational.

Georgetown University economist Harry Holzer pointed to the Clinton Administration’s Youth Opportunities program, which was ended even though “it received positive evaluations that were shelved for several years” by the Bush Administration. Holzer quipped that the result is that “Right now, the largest dropout program we’ve got is called incarceration.”

“Who do you think you are?”

Rep. Vic Snyder (D-Ark) took the unusual tack of asking fellow committee member Rep. Elijah Cummings (D-Md), whom he described as “a hero of mine,” to testify from the dais about his own early educational and work experiences.

“My parents moved from South Carolina to Baltimore for one reason,” Cummings began, “to give their children a decent education, because they had only managed to get to second grade.”

When he went to school, however, he was placed in “the third group, special ed,” and told he would never be able to advance beyond the 5th-grade level, if that, and would have to take up manual labor.

“I said I wanted to be a lawyer and was told, ‘You’re kidding! Who do you think you are?’ ” Cummings recounted. “That conversation stayed with me.”

The challenge, and the support of teachers, drove him to get out of special education, become an attorney and eventually get elected to Congress.

Yet he spoke with relish of one of his first jobs, as a pipe washer, earning \$1 an hour. “I was happy to get it,” he said.

—Cecilio Morales

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Youth Programs

DOL ISSUES SWEEPING CHANGES TO YOUTH EMPLOYMENT RULES

Teenagers in the median strip of a busy roadway, holding signs pointing to a mattress store at a nearby shopping center or goofily waving from inside the oversize costume of a restaurant’s mascot are a regular sight in many parts of the country. Those jobs end, at least for the nation’s youngest legal workers, come July 12, when a wide-ranging set of federal youth employment regulations takes effect.

The Department of Labor Wage and Hour Division issued a sweeping set of changes to child labor regulations that has been more than three years in the making. It will prohibit teen employment in some occupations and open up other jobs to teens that previously were closed.

Employers will no longer be able to hire younger teen workers for door-to-door sales or offer long shifts on Friday evenings. Fifteen-year-olds will now be able to work as lifeguards in more circumstances than before.

The rules will place limits on the U.S. Forest Service’s use of Job Corps participants in fire fighting and will open up internship opportunities during the school day to college-bound students.

A few minor changes have been made since the rules were first proposed in 2007 (ETR 5/7/07, p. 507). The rules, which take effect in two stages on July 12 and July 19, were published in the May 20 *Federal Register*.

WHD officials call the rules “the most ambitious and far-reaching revisions to the child labor regulations in the last 35 years.” Conversely, an official from the Child Labor Coalition — a mix of labor and worker advocacy groups — once described them as “welcome” but disappointingly “modest.”

The changes affect a wide variety of positions and work activities that can be filled and performed by 14- to 17-year-olds.

For 16- and 17-year-olds, the changes generally add to the type of work designated as hazardous and therefore unlawful.

Current rules forbid older teens from operating “power-driven hoisting equipment,” but the new rules specify that this includes cherry pickers, light loaders and forklifts. Prohibitions covering saw use will include hand-powered chainsaws.

One change expands a ban on work in logging and sawmills to include other forms of forestry and forest-fire fighting. This initially worried U.S. Forest Service officials, who feared it would restrict work performed by students at the agency’s Job Corps centers. The Forest Service contended that it employs Job Corps students and other teens in fire-prevention efforts such as clearing brush from fire roads, maintaining fire camps and acting as look-outs.

WHD officials offered a compromise, allowing older teens to work in this type of forestry, so long as they are not actually doing their jobs when an active fire is ablaze.

The child labor policies include more sweeping changes to the work and conditions allowable for 14- and 15-year-old workers.

Ambiguities Removed

Current rules are somewhat vague about permissible employment options for younger teen workers. The regulations generally limit young teens to working in food service, retail and gas stations and bars them from settings such as mines, factories and warehouses.

Because of the ambiguity of jobs and work sites that are neither specifically allowed nor disallowed, WHD has made a number of exceptions over the years, either through formal guidance to its offices or simply by inaction.

The new regulations are significantly restructured to make them easier to read, and they add more examples of jobs and tasks that younger teens may and may not do.

Newly permitted, for instance, is life guarding and teaching swimming, but only for 15-year-olds certified by the American Red Cross or another “recognized certifying organization.”

WHD has, since 2000, had policy guidance in place instructing its offices to allow 15-year-olds certified by the Red Cross to work as lifeguards at public pools. However, the new rules specifically allow them to work at private pools and teach swimming. However, the rules prohibit 15-year-old lifeguards from working atop water park flumes.

The rules will allow younger teens, who currently are restricted from working in meat coolers and freezers, to occasionally enter walk-in freezers while working in food service settings, so long as they are there only momentarily to retrieve a bag of french fries or a box of burgers.

Work in offices and work “of an intellectual or artistically creative nature” will now be permitted for younger teens.

In addition, the new rules will specify that younger teens can work in groundskeeping and provide an exception to a provision that bars them from unloading equipment from vehicles. Younger workers will be allowed to unload light tools such as rakes and shovels or personal protective equipment.

The current rules are silent on younger teens working in door-to-door sales, and for years some youth advocacy groups have portrayed these jobs as dangerous, subjecting teens to unscrupulous sales team leaders and dangers of working on the street (ETR 5/24/10, p. 455).

The new rules include a prohibition against “peddling” that goes into lengthy detail. Essentially, it prohibits younger teens from participating in

door-to-door sales or acting as “wavers,” workers who stand on a corner tossing an oversized arrow around, wearing a sandwich board or waving with a costume on.

Exceptions allow for waving from a sidewalk directly in front of an employer’s store or conducting sales on an employer’s outdoor property, for instance, at a garden center.

Another exception in the new rules allows younger teens to perform volunteer sales for nonprofit organizations and public agencies, so bake sales, charity car washes and Girl Scout cookie stands remain permissible.

Two important changes are also coming to the hours young people can work. The general construct of current regulations remains the same: younger teens may work no more than 18 hours per week during the school year, 40 hours over the summer, 3 hours on any school day, and 8 hours on weekends.

However, WHD officials say they commonly encounter employers who are confused by which days are school days.

The new rules make clear that the feds consider Friday to be a school day, subject to the three-hour shift limitation, explaining that the intent is to prevent young people from becoming exhausted working late after a full day of school.

School-Day Work-Study

Another change creates an exception, allowing younger teens to work during the school day when they are participating in a work-study program while attending a college preparatory program.

WHD acknowledges that this change was designed to accommodate the Cristo Rey Network of parochial schools, whose internship program is part of their curriculum.

Officials from the National Association of State Directors of Career and Technical Education and the New Jersey Department of Education had commented on the proposed rule, asking WHD to drop a requirement that work-study programs that take place during school hours be linked to a college-preparatory curriculum, suggesting that career and technical programs would be shut out from this option.

WHD officials kept the limitation, calling the concern “unfounded,” because an existing section of their current rules allows for students to work during school hours while enrolled in “work experience and career exploration programs.”

The exemptions from school-hour restrictions and administrative requirements of the old and continuing work experience and new work-study programs are substantially similar, according to WHD officials. They also stressed that other private and public schools will be able to use the work-study exemption that was designed for Cristo Rey.

“The Department wishes to emphasize that the development of this student work program was never intended to advantage any single, private school system, but was proposed for the benefit of all academically motivated students enrolled in college preparatory curricula that can avail themselves of such a program of employment that clearly facilitates, rather than interferes with, their schooling,” the rulemaking says.

—Ryan Hess

Dropouts

MDRC FINDS SMALLER GAINS IN ‘CHALLENGE’ AT 21 MONTHS

Youths in a military-flavored second-chance program for dropouts were more likely than their peers to have earned a high school diploma or equivalent and be working or continuing education, and less likely to have been convicted of a crime, says a new snapshot of the venture.

Caution

Still, researchers unveiling their “second chapter” in a continuing evaluation series of the National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Program warn that the current results “suggest some reason for caution.” Chief among these is that the differences between those served and comparable youths were “smaller” in the current 21-month post-program sounding than in the nine-month survey reported on earlier.

“Relatively few program group members were in college, so it is not yet clear how many ChalleNGe graduates will use their high school credentials to obtain further education or training that may qualify them for higher-paying jobs,” write MDRC researchers Megan Millenky, Dan Bloom and Colleen Dillon in *Making the Transition: Interim Results of the National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Evaluation*.

“While encouraging, these interim results are not the final word on ChalleNGe,” writes MDRC President Gordon Berlin in the work’s preface. “It will be critical to see how the participants in the study have fared over a longer period, particularly because the survey was administered at a time when unemployment rates for disadvantaged youth have reached crisis levels.”

Program watchers are urged to stay tuned for the next episode, the results of the 36-month survey, scheduled to be available in late 2010.

The ChalleNGe research saga spun by the New York City-based MDRC began in 2004, when Department of Defense officials began casting about for scientifically rigorous data on a program that had been running since 1993.

At this writing, about 90,000 youths have completed participation in the 17-month program, which began as a 10-site pilot until 1998, when Congress made it permanent and the effort expanded to 32 programs in 27 states and Puerto Rico.

MDRC applied its signature random-assignment method to some 3,000 youths at ChalleNGe 10 sites between 2005 and 2006. Researchers compared a group of young people who applied and were invited to participate (the program group) with youths who applied to and were deemed acceptable, but were not invited to participate (the control group).

MDRC found that 61 percent of the program group reported having a high school or General Educational Development diploma, compared with 36 percent of the control group. Millenky, Bloom and Dillon interpret the difference to mean that “such a result would be very unlikely to have arisen from an ineffective program.” As they caution from the outset, however, the difference between groups was 36 points at MDRC’s nine-month sounding.

What happened? GED results stayed up, but comparative gains in high school diploma attainment waned. “The gap between groups may shrink further over time,” Millenky and colleagues state.

At 21 months after program departure, 72.1 percent of participants were involved in study, training or work, compared with 66.4 percent of controls. More participants worked full time (43.7 percent) than controls (38.8 percent). The participants tended to earn more than \$8 an hour, while the bulk of controls made only \$6 to \$8 an hour.

Not surprisingly, given the military feel of the program, participants were twice as likely to have joined the military. “More than 30 percent of the research sample reported at baseline that they were interested in ChalleNGe in part because they wanted to join the military,” the researchers explain.

Fewer Convicted

Because ChalleNGe accepted individuals with past brushes with the law, but none with business pending, researchers compared the incidence of alleged illegal behavior. MDRC found that participants and controls were just as likely to be arrested or charged with a crime in the year before the survey, but more of the controls got convicted.

“It is not clear what caused the lower conviction rates,” Millenky and associates write, “but one hypothesis is that the program group had better contacts to help them navigate the judicial system and avoid conviction.”

The researchers found much lower rates of arrests, charges and convictions all around at nine months, but “a large percentage of the program group had spent much of that nine month period in the ChalleNGe residential program, where they were closely monitored and tightly scheduled.”

The program appears to have reduced binge drinking, but both groups reported a lower rate of binge drinking than is common at that age. “Rates of marijuana and other illegal drug use are higher in the ChalleNGe sample than in the general population,” the authors write, but they are comparable between participants and controls.

The groups were just as likely to be living with a partner or married, but participants were more likely to be living on their own or pregnant.

“This result is somewhat puzzling since there were no impacts on measures of sexual activity or use of birth control. Moreover, there is no evidence that program group members were more likely to be living on their own with a child,” the MDRC researchers state.

Intervention, Not Remediation

The program itself was designed years earlier by DOD’s National Guard Bureau staff. According to one insider in that process, Daniel Donohoe, the staff drew up an “intervention” rather than a “remedial” program.

“We would deal with the symptoms and underlying causes in a construct that fully embraced a ‘whole person’ change and readied the students for the post-program environment,” Donohoe wrote in 2008. “We would arm them with the skills and experiences necessary to succeed and we would ensure there was ‘a way back’ to mainstream society.”

To achieve these lofty goals, the National Guard staff carved out a “quasi-military,” three-stage program. The ChalleNGe prepared and directed 16- to 18-year-old unemployed, drug-free dropouts for 22 weeks of life as “cadets” on a military base.

The youths, 80 percent of whom have been male, were to be divided into platoons and squads, live in barracks, have their hair cut short, wear uniforms, be subject to military discipline in a highly structured daily schedule with almost no “down time” and tight supervision. All that is followed by a year off-base.

The curriculum aims to instill the behavior necessary for leading and following, responsible citizenship, community service, life coping, physical fitness, health and hygiene, job skills and academic excellence.

States run ChalleNGe programs under an agreement with the National Guard; most have opted for a single 100-bed program, serving 200 participants per year in two class cycles.

✓ *Making the Transition: Interim Results of the National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Evaluation* by Megan Millenky, Dan Bloom and Colleen Dillon is available from MDRC, 16 East 34th Street, New York, N.Y. 10016; Web: www.mdrc.org.

—Cecilio Morales

Youth Programs

WIB TAPS NORTHWEST COMPANIES, SCHOOLS TO LAUNCH ‘HIGH TECH U’

High school students in southwest Washington and Portland, Ore., received a chance this spring to see firsthand where science and technology careers fit in their local economies.

They attended High Tech U, a project run since 2001 by the SEMI Foundation, a nonprofit, education-focused arm of a global trade association for the microelectronics industry.

Project staff coordinate the prepackaged events for sponsoring partnerships made up of schools, companies and other organizations.

High Tech U events are three-day hands-on learning and career exploration seminars. They bring students from local high schools into the facilities of local employers and the campus of a higher education partner. Workers at the host companies help facilitate the events and interact with students.

The agenda features hands-on activities such as “statapult.” Students fling bean bags with a mini catapult, varying its settings, measuring the results and learning a lesson on statistics and quality control. In “human calculator,” they walk across a floor mat that resembles a Twister board, but is covered with logic control gates simulating the flow of electrons through a circuit.

Business partners give tours and presentations on their industries, jobs and technologies used in their operations. The events include college tours that pay special attention to science and technology departments, sessions on career planning and mock interviews.

“Basically, it’s a series of hands-on exercises that show kids how math, science and engineering and technology fit into the workplace,” said Brandi Stewart-Wood, director of strategic initiatives for the Southwest Washington Workforce Development Council.

High Tech U events also feature a parents night leading up to the activities and a graduation ceremony. At each event, students nominate one of their peers to receive a \$1,000 scholarship.

The workforce board convened one High Tech U during the first week of May, bringing 38 students from nine high schools to the North Pacific Paper Corporation, Liquid Packaging and Lower Columbia College, all in Longview.

Another event, scheduled for mid-June, will bring students to Hewlett-Packard, WaferTech and Clark College, in Vancouver.

Several other corporate sponsors for these events included Weyerhaeuser, Columbia Machine, Employers Overload and Underwriters Laboratories. The Clark County High Technology & Community Council also supported these events, along with funding from a Workforce Innovation in Regional

Economic Development grant for the Washington-Oregon region. Each event costs about \$30,000 to \$35,000 to produce, covering facilitation costs, learning materials and incidentals such as lunches, according to the SEMI Foundation.

According to Lisa Nisenfeld, executive director of the SWWDC, employers were eager to sponsor these events. They want to maintain a pipeline of future workers who, without guidance and exposure, might overlook careers in their community that hinge on math, science and technology skills, in paper mills and food packaging factories.

“Every manufacturer in our region is shifting toward higher uses of technology in their processes. The employers are positioning their image, being part of the new economy, to young people,” she told MII.

The workforce agency allotted seats to local school districts from about 40 slots in each High Tech U program, allowing schools decide who will attend. SEMI emphasizes recruitment of students who may not be at the top of their class but have unrealized potential.

Suzanne Cusick, superintendent of Longview Public Schools and a board member of the SWWDC, attended one day of a High Tech U event held at the North Pacific Paper Corporation.

“What the students really appreciate is the hands-on learning experience. They really appreciate the relevance,” Cusick said.

The activities supplement in-school learning in a number of ways. Students are exposed to new careers, see academics applied in industry and witness the importance of soft skills, such as teamwork, in a work setting, according to the superintendent.

In the past year, the SEMI Foundation has held High Tech U events in Arizona, California, New York, Oregon, Austria, France, Japan and the Netherlands.

In March, the 100th High Tech U was hosted just over the Columbia River in Hillsboro, Ore., by Intel, SolarWorld and Portland Community College.

The foundation surveys students who participate in the events.

Among students served last year, 88 percent said the experience helped influence their education and career goals, 62 percent reported that they plan to take more science, technology, engineering and math courses and 71 percent of those who had not previously decided on a college major were leaning toward STEM programs.

The SEMI Foundation also offers to coordinate a version of High Tech U in which high school teachers are the participants.

Nisenfeld said her workforce board is pursuing the possibility of convening one of these for schools in the region.

Technical Education

TECH STUDENTS LAG IN SCIENCE PROFICIENCY, COURSETAKING

Technical education students lagged behind their peers in their mastery of high school science, although technical students in some program areas outscored mainstream students on a national standardized exam.

The National Center for Education Statistics recently published an analysis of science test scores and coursetaking patterns, comparing the achievement of technical students to that of other students graduating from high school in 2005.

It found significant differences in students' grasp of science skills, as measured by the Nation's Report Card testing program.

Concentrators

Authors Karen Levesque, Jolene Wun and Caitlin Green, of the research firm MPR Associates, use the term “occupational concentrator” to describe students who took two or more credits — often meaning at least two classes — in a technical program while in high school.

These students represented about 37.6 percent of all graduates that year.

The analysts compared test scores from the 2005 National Assessment of Educational Progress science exam, administered to 12th-graders.

Nationwide, students who had an occupational concentration in high school had an average NAEP score of 143, compared with an average score of 150 among other students.

That particular NAEP exam is graded on a 300-point scale, with a score of 178 signifying proficiency, so neither mainstream nor technical students, on average, achieved science proficiency, as described by the National Assessment Governing Board.

The NAEP exams are administered on a staggered schedule and even though the science exam was administered to 12th-graders in 2009, those results have yet to be released; the 2005 results are the most recent available scores.

“These overall patterns are consistent with previous descriptive studies of the academic achievement of CTE participants,” the authors wrote. “However, these overall patterns varied across occupational program areas.”

Agriculture, finance, communications and engineering technology students' average scores were statistically the same as nonconcentrators'; computer science students posted an average score of 155.

Students in some of the most heavily enrolled occupational programs, however, had significantly lower than average scores. Students in manufactur-

—Ryan Hess

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ing and business programs, on average, scored a 138; students in health sciences, 141.

Coursetaking can affect students' skill levels, and technical students have been known to forsake optional academics in favor of technical studies.

Because of this, researchers also compared technical and mainstream students who had taken similar numbers of biology, physics and chemistry classes.

Among students who had completed only one credit in a core science subject, occupational concentrators actually scored higher than other students, a 129-to-123 comparison.

However, there was no difference in scores between technical and mainstream students who took up to three credits of science. Mainstream students who maxed out their science coursetaking did outscore technical students who also completed more than three sciences classes, matching up with scores of 173 to 165.

These patterns held across most occupational areas, with some exceptions. Technical students in health sciences programs, notably, lagged significantly behind their peers no matter how many core science classes they completed.

On average, mainstream students completed 1.4 biology credits, 0.8 in chemistry and 0.4 in physics, whereas technical students completed 1.2 credits in biology, 0.6 in chemistry and 0.3 in physics.

Technical students in health programs earned 1.5 biology credits, but still lagged in the other sciences.

The authors caution that many additional factors may be at play in science achievement.

"Self-selection on the part of students with different abilities, interests and aptitudes into different types of coursework — both academic and CTE coursework — may also be a factor, as may the science content of some CTE courses," they write.

✓ The report *Science Achievement in and Occupational Career/Technical Education Coursetaking in High School: The Class of 2005* is available at <http://nces.ed.gov>.

—Ryan Hess

Ticket to Work

MORE SSDI BENEFICIARIES WORK THAN PREVIOUSLY THOUGHT

Many more Social Security disability beneficiaries work than oft-quoted statistics tell, according to an SSA official's impression of new research, and the focus of employment interventions for this population may need to shift to retention.

It is often said that fewer than 1 in 200 individuals who receive Social Security disability benefits leave the because of work. That figure, "less than one-half of one percent," is even included in the preamble to the 1999 Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act.

Strictly speaking, that number is correct, but a much larger number of disability beneficiaries participate in employment after qualifying and receiving disability benefits, researchers from Mathematica Policy Research discovered.

For instance, as many as 28 percent of a cohort of Social Security Disability Insurance recipients who came on the rolls in 1996 became employed over a 10-year period, the researchers found.

The Social Security Administration tasked Mathematica with analyzing employment among disability beneficiaries from a few different angles in order to better inform policy and practice related to the Ticket to Work program and other employment efforts for individuals with disabilities. A policy forum, on May 20, showcased findings from this work, which are featured in recent and forthcoming briefs and reports from Mathematica.

The oft-quoted 0.5 percent refers to the percentage of all individuals on SSDI and Supplemental Security Income who, in a given year, have their benefits terminated due to employment.

That relatively short window offers a count of individuals leaving the rolls for work that is naturally small, according to David Stapleton, director of Mathematica's Center for Studying Disability Policy, who wrote an issue brief on the matter. Using SSA administrative data, Stapleton examined the employment and benefit receipt over a decade of SSDI recipients who came onto the rolls in 1996.

28 Percent

There were 591,493 new beneficiaries that year. Among them, 28 percent eventually became employed, 10.3 percent worked for at least nine months (the maximum a beneficiary may work without affecting benefits), 6.5 percent received a temporary suspension of benefits because of employment and 3.7 percent eventually worked themselves off the rolls.

After their cases were closed, 2.7 percent of the SSDI class of 1996 remained off the rolls and 1 percent reapplied and returned.

Most of the individuals who left Social Security for employment did so after being on the rolls for four years, and only about half of those who tried employment at all did so within their first year of receiving disability benefits.

Looking only at recipients ages 18 to 40, Stapleton found that 46 percent worked at some point.

This number is encouraging and shows there is a pool of beneficiaries who are working, or at least making attempts at employment, who might become more self-sufficient with improved work incentives and supports, according to Stapleton.

Gina Livermore, a senior researcher at Mathematica, looked at a different subset of beneficiaries and came up with a similar result. Livermore

has been following a sample of beneficiaries first surveyed about work in 2004. She previously reported that about 40 percent of surveyed beneficiaries had employment aspirations (ETR 9/22/08, p. 36).

Now, with follow-up data through 2007, Livermore has found that 45 percent of those with employment aspirations worked at some point over those years, earning about \$7,000 per year on average. Even 15 percent of individuals who did not have work aspirations in 2004 had found employment.

“This is somewhat surprising and might indicate that people’s expectations are changing over time,” said Livermore, who has a paper forthcoming on her findings.

Another research project using SSA administrative data found that participants in the Ticket to Work program — through which beneficiaries voluntarily agree to a service and employment plan with independent providers and state vocational rehabilitation agencies — were more likely than nonparticipants to be successful in employment.

About 2.6 percent of SSDI beneficiaries and 1.7 percent of SSI recipients who were using their Tickets in 2006 stopped collecting benefits because of employment, compared with about 1 percent of nonparticipants in both benefit categories.

However, because only a small fraction of all beneficiaries have participated in Ticket to Work, there are still far larger numbers of nonparticipants who leave the rolls for employment, said research associate Jody Schimmel, who also has a paper forthcoming.

About 60 percent of Ticket participants and slightly fewer nonparticipants stayed off the disability rolls for four years, she added.

Incidentally, in addition to finding that Ticket to Work participants were more likely than other beneficiaries to leave the rolls for employment,

Schimmel also discovered that SSA had made payments through Ticket to service providers in fewer than half the eligible cases.

Ticket is an outcome-based program in which providers can collect payments from SSA only as individuals meet employment goals.

SSA is currently combing through its records and paying providers that are owed. However, in a substantial number of cases there were legitimate reasons for Ticket’s failure to pay. For example, some providers had dropped out of the program by the time clients met employment goals.

Responding to the research project, Paul O’Leary, an SSA analyst in the Office of Retirement and Disability Policy, said he feels the numbers have several implications.

First, many beneficiaries are interested in working. Second, since Stapleton’s analysis showed that only about half of individuals whose benefits are suspended due to work eventually have their cases closed, employment programs and policies may need to focus efforts at this stage of the individual’s return to self-sufficiency.

Third, Stapleton’s work showed employment efforts were even more prevalent among beneficiaries under age 40, making them a population of interest.

And finally, in light of Schimmel’s finding that many of those who leave the rolls for work stay off for four or more years, helping individuals remain employed may be significant, according to O’Leary.

“SSA does not so much have a problem with getting people to work — SSA has a problem with keeping people at work,” the agency official said. “This suggests new approaches may be needed to focus on prolonging success for those who work.”

✓ Find issue briefs and full reports covering these findings at www.disabilitypolicyresearch.org.

—Ryan Hess

Briefs

Trade Adjustment Assistance

TAA PETITIONS SURGE

In the year following a significant overhaul of the Trade Adjustment Assistance program, almost 4,500 groups of laid-off workers have filed for its aid.

That's according to a review of TAA statistics released by the National Employment Law Project on May 18, the first anniversary of the implementation date of the Trade and Globalization Adjustment Assistance Act. This was a sizable overhaul of the TAA program passed as part of the Recovery Act. It extended eligibility for the program to workers in the service and public sectors and workers whose jobs moved to any foreign country, not just countries that maintain a free trade agreement with the United States.

It also improved program benefits, extended the duration of income support from 130 to 156 weeks beyond the exhaustion of unemployment insurance, and almost doubled the amount of funding allocated to states for retraining.

In calendar year 2009, the Employment and Training Administration certified 2,175 petitions for TAA, covering 240,714 workers. By comparison, there were 1,599 petitions certified in 2008.

"The expanded trade assistance program is becoming an increasingly important safety net for workers laid off in trade-related industries. Between record unemployment and expanded funding and eligibility, more and more workplaces are seeking TAA certification. The amendments Congress enacted a year ago appear to be paying off," NELP Deputy Director Andrew Stettner said in a statement.

The changes brought to TAA expire at the end of December. The working advocacy organization is calling for their reauthorization.

The increased TAA petitions have, however, brought delays. The average processing time for TAA petitions was 37 days in 2008, but reached 100 days in 2009, according to NELP statistics.

This may in part be because many worker representatives, anticipating a more generous and liberal program, waited to petition for TAA coverage until last May's change-over date.

This isn't the only stress placed on the program. The changes mandated that services offered to TAA participants include case management and gave states \$350,000 each per year in addition to their training allotment to provide case management.

This was "nowhere near the amount needed by some larger states," according to a position on TAA

adopted in February by the National Association of State Workforce Agencies board of directors.

NASWA is also supporting reauthorization of the enhanced TAA program, while calling for increased funding for these frontline services.

—R.H.

Occupational Outlook

AIR FORCE WANTS CIVILIANS

The Air Force is looking for workers. Officials from the Air Force Personnel Center, at Randolph Air Force Base in San Antonio, announced a civilian hiring surge on May 25.

By the end of 2011, the Air Force plans to advertise up to 17,000 civilian positions on the federal hiring Web site www.USAJobs.gov. More than 3,000 civilian positions have been filled so far this year, and *USAJobs* currently has more than 2,500 Air Force civilian job listings from bases around the country and abroad. Positions and wages range from general labor with entry-level hourly wages to expert specialists with six-figure salaries.

"These career opportunities cover a broad spectrum of skill sets necessary to support national defense and Air Force objectives, from information technology specialists and aircraft simulator instructors to housing management assistants and biological scientists," Civilian Force Integration Director Michelle LoweSolis said in a statement. "The importance of our civilian workforce cannot be overstated, nor our desire to get the best qualified people into these positions."

The increase in civilian job opportunities is being driven by several factors, including the conversion of Air Force jobs that were contracted out to permanent civilian positions and growth in new organizations.

The Air Force Personnel Center has set up a special Web site to guide civilians through its hiring process, at www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/afcivilianjobs.

This site links directly to the listing of Air Force civilian jobs on www.USAJobs.gov, saving the jobseeker some searching.

Air Force officials emphasized that hiring preferences are available to veterans, military spouses and other dependents of servicemembers and veterans.

—R.H.

Training Programs

ILLINOIS AID PROGRAM RUNS DRY

In yet another example of the demand for job training, the Illinois Student Assistance Commission announced May 25 that it is receiving more than 5,000 applications a week for a state need-based tuition assistance program, even though funding is depleted.

Illinois' Monetary Award Program is a state-level postsecondary education grant, providing tuition assistance to college students with demonstrated financial need. In recent years, it has had a maximum award level of just under \$5,000.

Unlike the federal Pell grant, the MAP is limited to state appropriations, so only a limited number of awards are available each year. For the coming year, Gov. Pat Quinn (D) has proposed about \$400 million for the program, which has yet to be approved by the legislature. The student aid commission identified students who can expect to receive awards, but when that \$400 was spoken for, they began counting those who are eligible but are not likely to receive support.

Within a month, close to 27,000 eligible students were denied the aid. About 65 percent were students planning to attend community colleges, and 7 percent were students at private technical and professional schools.

The program has run out of money in years past, but this demand has been much higher, according to ISAC officials, who are projecting that as many as 220,000 students will apply and be eligible for aid, but will not receive the grant. Only 120,000 eligible students were denied aid for this academic year, while 183,000 received awards.

"We hope students don't hear this news and get discouraged, as there is still federal and institutional aid available," ISAC Executive Director Andrew Davis said in a statement. "The key is to fill out the FAFSA if you haven't already."

—R.H.

Unemployment Insurance

COURT ORDERS UI FOR STRIPPERS

Dancers at a "gentlemen's club" are employees due unemployment insurance and other benefits, not merely "independent contractors," as alleged by the owner of Club Orleans in Topeka, Kan., ruled the Kansas Court of Appeals.

The court case arose out of legal challenge to an administrative ruling by an unemployment tax contributions unit hearing officer of the Kansas Department of Labor.

The hearing officer found that the club's house rules indicate control over the hours and details of

the entertainers' work. A written agreement entertainers were required to sign stated that "entertainers could not refuse drinks from Club Orleans' customers and prohibited entertainers from 'working the crowd' around the stage area, as another entertainer performed her routine on stage," the court states.

The rules also "prohibited an entertainer from leaving the stage at any time during her three-song set," after which they were duty bound to gather their personal effects and exit the stage, as another entertainer entered. The entertainers were also required to notify management of "rude, abusive, grabby or threatening" customers.

That's not how Milano's, Inc., which owns the club, saw the matter. Milano's owner testified that customers frequented Club Orleans for the "good atmosphere, good lighting and good food." The club's pleading also argues that the entertainers are "separate business persons who pay rent for the theater Milano's provides."

The appeals court points out that "the facts indicate that the 'atmosphere largely derives from and is based upon the presence of its semi-nude dancers,'" making the entertainers essential to the business.

Moreover, the appeals panel agreed with the lower court's decision to affirm the hearing officer's determination that "the entertainers' tips constituted wages" as defined by the Kansas Employment Security Law.

As the club owner alleged, the entertainers pay for their own costumes, shoes, hair, nails and plastic surgery. However, the officer noted, the club provides in exchange a stage, dressing room, showers, towels, soap, razors, sound equipment, lighting, security and a tanning bed.

✓ *Milano's v. Kansas Dept. of Labor, Contributions Unit*, Court of Appeals of the State of Kansas, no. 102,114.

—C.M.

Unemployment

VACANCIES TO JOBS IN 38 STATES

Employment increased in 38 states and the District of Columbia in April and decreased in 12 states, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported.

The month brought little change or slight declines in regional and state unemployment rates, down in 34 states and D.C., up in six and unchanged in 10. Over the year, 38 states and D.C. posted jobless rate increases from a year earlier, 10 states decreases and two states no change.

Ohio led the jobs surge with 37,300 new jobs, followed by Pennsylvania (34,000), New York (32,700), Texas (32,500) and Virginia (28,100). In percentage terms, the largest upward over-the-month movement in jobs took place in Arizona, Indiana, Kansas and Virginia (0.8 percent

each), followed by Alabama and Ohio (0.7 percent each).

On the downside, Maine led in employment decline with a net job loss of 6,500, followed by Rhode Island (4,400), Colorado (4,200) and New Hampshire (4,100). Maine also experienced the largest over-the-month percentage decrease in employment (1.1 percent).

Employment was still lower than a year earlier in 48 states and up in two states and D.C.

The West reported the highest regional jobless rate in April, 10.9 percent, and the Northeast the lowest, 8.9 percent.

Over the month, the South was the only region to experience a statistically significant unemployment

rate change (0.2 percentage point). In contrast, all four regions registered significant rate increases from a year earlier: the West (1.1 percentage points), South (0.9 point), Northeast (0.8 point) and Midwest (0.6 point).

Michigan again recorded the highest unemployment rate among the states, 14.0 percent in April. The states with the next highest rates were Nevada, 13.7 percent; California, 12.6 percent; and Rhode Island, 12.5 percent. North Dakota continued to register the lowest jobless rate, 3.8 percent, followed by South Dakota and Nebraska, 4.7 and 5.0 percent, respectively. The rate in Nevada set a new series high. (All region, division, and state series begin in 1976.)☆

Bulletin Board

CONGRESS

Bills Introduced

VETERANS — The GI Bill Equitable Education Benefit Act, S 3389, would extend Post 9/11 GI Bill benefits to reservists now disqualified because they received other military education benefits. Introduced May 21, by Sen. Kay R. Hagan (D-NC).

VETERANS — The Veterans Employment Transition Act, S 3398 and HR 5400, would allow the work opportunity tax credit to be claimed by employers for hiring recently discharged veterans. Introduced May 24 and 25, respectively, by Sen. Max Baucus (D-Mont) and Rep. Tim Walz (D-Minn).

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE — The Protecting Against Indebting our Descendants through Fully Offset Relief Temporary Extension Act, S 3420, would continue enhanced and extended unemployment insurance benefits for one month, paying for it with a \$13 billion rescission to unexpended Recovery Act accounts across the federal government on a pro rata basis. Introduced May 25, by Sen. Charles Grassley (R-Iowa).

YOUTH CORPS — The Youth Corps Act, HR 5376, would authorize Workforce Investment Act competitive grants to fund programs in the Youth and Con-

servation Corps models. Introduced May 25, by Rep. Robert Andrews (D-NJ).

VISAS — The H-1B and L-1 Visa Reform Act, HR 5397, to reduce fraud and abuse in visa programs for highly skilled foreign workers and foreign workers whose countries are opening offices in the United States. The measure would require the Department of Labor to set up a Web site listing all jobs employers are attempting to fill through these visa programs. Introduced May 25, by Rep. Bill Pascrell, Jr. (D-NJ).

FEDERAL GUIDANCE

Training and Employment Guidance Letter

TEGL 03-09, Change 3 — Clarification to final guidance to state workforce agencies and employers for the implementation of the two Target Groups Requirements under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act's Work Opportunity Tax Credit, clarifies the deadline for employers to submit youth self-attestation forms in order to claim the tax credit. Issued May 24.

Unemployment Insurance Program Letter

UIPL 24-10 — Federal Additional Compensation — Application of the Nonreduction Rule, explains how the Employment and Training Administration will

implement a provision of the Recovery Act that requires states to maintain their weekly UI benefit amounts in order to receive funding for the federal \$25 per week added to benefits. Issued May 26.

GRANTS

VETERANS — The Veterans' Employment and Training Service is soliciting proposals through www.grants.gov for one or two cooperative agreements of up to \$500,000 each to operate the Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program National Technical Assistance Center in program year 2010. Non-profit organizations are eligible to apply by June 24.

✓ Contact Cassandra Mitchell, at (202) 693-4570.

CHARTER SCHOOLS — The Department of Education solicited applications in the May 24 *Federal Register* for grants of \$1 million to \$15 million to fund the replication of high-quality charter schools. Applications are due July 7.

✓ Contact Erin Pfeltz, at (202) 205-3525 or erin.pfeltz@ed.gov; or Richard Peyton, at (202) 453-7698 or richard.peyton@ed.gov.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT — The Ford Foundation announced May 18 the commitment of \$200 million over five years to projects that build on housing, land use and transportation for metropolitan economic growth, such as those that encourage affordable housing or set up transit lines to connect residents to jobs.

✓ See www.fordfound.org.

COLLEAGUES

CINDY ZEHNDER, vice president of government affairs at the law firm Gordon Thomas Honeywell, was appointed to chair Washington's Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board. She served as deputy commissioner of employment security and worked for the Teamsters union before serving as Gov. Chris Gregoire's (D) chief of staff.

KIM MCGINNIS, currently vice president of continuing education at James Sprunt Community College in Kenansville, N.C., will become president of Williamsburg Technical College, in Kingtree, S.C., on July 1. McGinnis' career in technical education began as a horticulture instructor.

RECOGNITION

GOODWILL — Goodwill Industries International announced Sandra Martin and Autum Beel as Graduates of the Year and Richard Lopez as Goodwill's Achiever of the Year.

Martin, who began to lose her vision as a young person, received job coaching and interviewing assistance from Goodwill Industries of Southwest Florida, landing a job as an outreach coordinator for the Visually Impaired Persons of Southwest Florida.

Beel, who struggled with teen drug addiction and homelessness, participated in retail and customer service training through Seattle Goodwill Industries, enabling her to become head cashier at a Home Depot outlet and settle down with her children.

Lopez, recovering from alcoholism and bouncing between jobs, found work as a mail room clerk in Goodwill Industries of Central Austin's Commercial Service Division, where he has risen to contract manager and mentor to new employees.

TEXAS — Texas Workforce Commission Executive Director Larry Temple was named public administrator of the year by the CenTex Chapter of the American Society for Public Administration. Temple joined the Texas Workforce Commission in 1997, having served five years as deputy director of the Mississippi Department of Human Services.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PELL GRANTS — The Department of Education, in the May 27 *Federal Register*, issued its annual adjustments to factors in the need analysis for federal student aid.

POVERTY — The Census Bureau, in the May 26 *Federal Register*, requested comments on its plans to develop a supplemental poverty measure. Comments are due June 25.

✓ Contact David Johnson, at (301) 763-6443.

CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION — The Office of Vocational and Adult Education, in the May 27 *Federal Register*, requested comments on priorities and program requirements for grants funding the development of career and technical education programs of study. Comments are due June 28.

✓ Contact Laura Messenger at (202) 245-7840. ☆