

**Written Testimony of Representative Sheila Jackson Lee (TX-18)**  
**Make It in America: What's Next?**  
**PANEL 4: The Future of American Manufacturing & Skills Training**

Thank you Mr. Hoyer for convening these important hearings and for allowing me and my colleagues the opportunity to share our economic priorities and challenges for advancing the Make It In America plan.

As we continue the critical work of identifying and advancing effective policy change for our communities and collectively throughout the nation, it is important that we acknowledge the great progress we have made.

Our President has signed into law 16 Make It In America initiatives, all of which I have supported.

As we look to the pillars and priorities of the Make It In America plan, it is important to keep sight of the nearly 100 additional bills my colleagues and I have introduced calling for strategic action and fair enhancement of our economy as we continue to experience this growth.

The Make it in America plan, which aims to ensure that these jobs are permanent and sustainable throughout all sectors and populations of America, sets forth four central guiding posts:

1. We must adopt and pursue a well-developed national manufacturing strategy that begins right here in America.
2. We must promote the export of our manufacturing goods so that businesses can compete domestically and internationally.
3. We must also encourage businesses abroad to bring jobs and innovation back to the United States.
4. Lastly, and most importantly, we must train and educate a workforce that will secure the sustainability of this plan.

American businesses can only remain competitive when they have the trained and educated workers they need.

This is why I have introduced a bill that will help strengthen our education and skills-training programs to make sure our workers are getting the preparation and certifications they need while also providing an opportunity to find and retain work once trained with those high-demand skills.

H.R. 73, the "America RISING Act of 2015" which stands for *Realizing the Informational Skills and Initiative of New Graduates*, establishes a grant program for stipends to assist in the cost of compensation paid by employers to certain recent college graduates and provides funding for their further education in subjects relating to mathematics, science, engineering, and technology.

**ABOUT H.R. 73, THE "AMERICA RISING ACT OF 2015" AND THE PROBLEM IT ADDRESSES:**

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, in 2012 the national unemployment rate for persons with a bachelor's degree was 4.5% and 6.2% for those persons with associate's degrees among college graduates aged 25 years and older. For college graduates aged 18-25 these percentages were higher at 7.7%.

Because the typical college graduate leaves college owing an average of \$29,400, in student loan debt, a rate that has increased 6% every year since 2008, the current job market offers exceedingly few opportunities for them to obtain employment at a salary adequate to service their college loan debt.

There are more than 26 million small businesses in the United States, of these more than 4 million are owned and operated by members of economically and socially disadvantaged groups.

In the current economic climate, small businesses are experiencing difficulty in finding the resources needed to increase sales, modernize operations, and hire new employees.

Recent college graduates need the experience that can be obtained only in the workplace to refine their skills and lay the groundwork for productive careers and small and disadvantaged businesses need the technologically based problem-solving skills possessed by recent college graduates, particularly those with training in the areas of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

Enabling recent graduates to obtain employment with small business and companies operating in economically distressed areas benefits the national economy by granting graduates deferred payments on their student loans with frozen interest rates while they gain essential business management experience that they can put into practice throughout their careers.

All the while providing businesses the human capital and technical expertise needed to compete and win in the global economy of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The key elements of the program would be that the federal government would provide relief to a corps of recent college graduates in order for them to be deployed to assist struggling small and minority businesses in located in disadvantaged or economically depressed areas.

These are the types of business that are most in need of the technical and knowledge based skills possessed by recent college graduates but least able to afford them.

The benefit to participants is three-fold:

1. The federal government would provide relief from the piling interest rates of graduates' student loans by instating a freeze on their payments for two years while graduates who have not obtained a STEM degree are able to pursue a second training course or certification program in the STEM fields with eligibility for federal financial assistance.
2. Those graduates, who would have completed a degree in the STEM fields within the past 24 months, will be eligible to receive deferment of the cost of previous school balances by obtaining two years of additional education in the STEM fields as well as federal financial aid to complete the training.
3. The program participants will gain valuable experience applying the knowledge learned in college to the workplace after graduation or during their re-training.

In the long run the best way to guarantee America's future economic prosperity is to develop and grow an entrepreneurial class of Americans that is broadly represented among all demographic groups.

It is not enough to provide jobs that can be performed by the millions of low-skilled workers who need employment now.

In a global economy, any such job provided cannot be protected over the long haul and cannot be made lucrative enough to sustain a middle class standard of living.

Therefore, it is critical that there exist job training and re-training programs to enable workers to upgrade existing skills and to learn new ones.

I call upon my colleagues to support H.R. 73, the “America RISING Act of 2015,” which will help create the next generation of entrepreneurs and businesses that will provide good-paying middle-class jobs for America.

Thank you.



## HCC NE North Forest Campus

Program Summary – Construction Plan as of 10/19/15

### Existing Building

- Program Area 15,920 GSF
- Classrooms 7 + 1 Computer Lab
- Labs/Shops 1 (Future) Science Lab
- Amenities ERC + Testing + Business Incubator + Student Lounge

### Existing Building Renovation

- Program Area 25,426 GSF
- Classrooms 2 + 1 Group Study
- Labs/Shops 3 (Welding, HVAC/Electrical, Plumbing/Pipe Fitting)
- Amenities Collaborative Learning + Peer Tutoring Spaces + Student Lounge  
*STEM Collaboratorium*

### New Building Academic

- Program Area 20,450 GSF
- Classrooms 4
- Amenities Testing Center + Multi-Purpose Room + Student Lounge + Future Bookstore

### New Building Automotive Technology

- Program Area 35,534 GSF
- Classrooms 5
- Amenities Student Lounge

### New Central Utility Plant

- Program Area 1,595 GSF
- Yard 5,525 GSF

### Totals

- Building Area 98,925 GSF
- Classrooms 19
- Lab/Shops 4 + 16 Automotive Bays
- Parking 345 spaces