



Legislative Round-Up

Training takes center stage on Capitol Hill.

By C. Michael Ferraro and Jennifer Homer

One of the largest pieces of legislation of interest to the field is the reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), the landmark legislation originally passed in 1998 to streamline and coordinate workforce training programs at the federal level. While WIA reauthorization has not succeeded in recent years, there is a great deal of momentum behind it this year.

During the past several months, ASTD has met with legislative staff on the Senate's Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee and the House of Representatives' Education and Labor Committee to offer training expertise on WIA reauthorization. There is a draft bill for reauthorization on the House side (HR 4271), and staffers from the Senate's HELP committee have indicated they would be working on a draft. ASTD will continue to monitor activity on this legislation and provide updates through this column and in ASTD Links.

ASTD is also tracking Section 127, which is set to expire at the end of this year. Section 127 allows employers to exclude from an employee's wages

up to \$5,250 per year for payment or reimbursement of tuition, fees, books, and other supplies. This also includes certain undergraduate and graduate-level education. Employees who receive these benefits can exclude up to \$5,250 for those benefits from their taxable income. Employers who use this benefit can deduct these costs as a business expense when determining their income tax liability.

Section 127 was originally enacted in 1978 and since that time, Congress has periodically renewed it—in some cases retroactively after it expired. Section 127 is set to expire at the end of this year, and there are two bills—S 2851 and HR 5600—that call to make it permanent, among other education provisions.

ASTD is engaged in the Coalition to Preserve Employer Provided Education Assistance (CPEPEA), which supports the extension of Section 127. More information may be found at www.cpepea.com.

Originally introduced in the Senate in 2009, the Federal Supervisor Training Act (S 674) would require the director of the Office of Personnel Management

(OPM) to issue guidance to federal agencies on competencies that supervisors are expected to meet to effectively manage (and be accountable for managing) employee performance. It would require each agency to:

- develop competencies to assess the performance of each supervisor
- assess the overall capacity of the supervisors in the agency to meet such guidance
- develop and implement a supervisor training program to strengthen issues identified during such assessment
- measure the effectiveness of that program in improving supervisor competence.

In June, a companion bill was introduced in the House of Representatives (HR 5522), and it is gaining support. Recently, the House Subcommittee on the Federal Workforce took up the bill for discussion.

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Training Provider Approval for the Workforce Investment System

ASTD has become an approved training provider in the District of Columbia, Missouri, New York, and Virginia. This means that customers in these states who have received public funding for training through the local workforce investment system (especially those workers who have become dislocated due to the economy) could qualify to take ASTD courses using those funds. One recent addition is the approval of a bundled offering of preparation and testing fees for the Certified Professional in Learning and Performance (CPLP) credential.

Members should contact their local One-Stop Career Center to inquire about eligibility to receive funding. Go to www.servicelocator.org to search for your local One-Stop Center by zip code, city or state. Questions about ASTD-approved programs should be sent to Jennifer Homer at jhomer@astd.org.