

AFL-CIO

LEGISLATIVE ALERT

December 7, 2022

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the AFL-CIO, I write urging you to reauthorize the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program as soon as possible.

America's workers have felt the negative impacts of trade and globalization for decades. We have fought diligently over the years to stop outsourcing and ensure that workers have the job training benefits to compete when their jobs are shipped overseas through no fault of their own. That is why we are disappointed with those who have blocked reauthorization of the TAA program that provides workers with the job training benefits necessary to reskill and make America more competitive.

As the most recent Department of Labor report on TAA makes clear, the program has an outsized role in American manufacturing; last year alone, the manufacturing sector was responsible for 67 percent of total TAA certifications.¹ The AFL-CIO and our affiliate unions continually fight to minimize trade's negative impact on American jobs, but when layoffs do occur, Congress needs to do its part and ensure that our workers can access robust retraining benefits.

It is not only individual workers, but also the manufacturing sector as a whole, that has been the beneficiary of workers upskilling through TAA. Over one-third of workers who use the TAA program return to manufacturing – with more skills to help their employers better compete in the global marketplace.

Because Congress has failed to reauthorize the TAA program this year, over 30,000 workers across America have lost access to two years of job retraining benefits and income support. A recent study highlights that workers who received training gained a net economic benefit of \$50,000 more than their counterparts without access to training.²

With the recent enactment of the CHIPS Act, the future of advanced manufacturing looks promising - but only if we can meet employers' expected need in the coming years for tens of thousands skilled workers as new semiconductor fabrications come online. One recent study estimates a need of 70,000 to 90,000 workers, many of whom will need an associate's degree.³ The TAA program, which includes relocation allowances, will be critical to filing this need and helping our workers prepare for the high-tech economy of the future.

¹ <https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/ETA/tradeact/pdfs/AnnualReport21.pdf>

² <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/20/business/economy/trade-adjustment-assistance-jobs.html>

³ <https://eightfold.ai/resources/how-the-united-states-can-reshore-the-semiconductor-industry/>

The failure to reauthorize TAA will be devastating for the economies of all 50 states, as well as Puerto Rico. Over the past 12 years, an aggregate \$8.8 billion has been dedicated to displaced workers. Moreover, it should be evident that cutting TAA at a time when global events like Russia's aggression in Ukraine and China's threats to Taiwan are forcing manufacturers to reassess their scope of doing business, is particularly bad public policy. We ask you, as soon as possible, to support a robust reauthorization of the TAA program to prepare our workers for the jobs of the 21st century. Our workers, employers, and our communities are counting on you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "William Samuel".

William Samuel
Director, Government Affairs