

FlowerMoundLeader

LAWMAKERS ANNOUNCE INITIATIVE TO RESKILL AND UPSKILL WORKFORCE

Flower Mound Leader
April 9, 2021

Rep. Tan Parker (R-Flower Mound) and Sen. Brandon Creighton (R-Conroe) have filed the Texas Reskilling & Upskilling through Education Initiative, an investment in Texas community colleges and technical institutions to quickly reskill and upskill the Texas workforce and put Texans back to work in high-demand occupations.

Of the record number of Texans who lost their jobs and filed initial claims for unemployment, many lack skills to quickly reenter the workforce. The unemployment rate for individuals with a high school diploma or less remains significantly higher than for individuals with post-secondary credentials. As the current provider of more than 90% of credit-bearing career and technical education certificates, Texas community colleges are best positioned to close the skills gaps to good-paying jobs.

"Texas is a rapidly growing state, and our diverse economy requires a robust and prepared workforce to continue attracting investment and growth. The TRUE initiative will provide an edge to students seeking in-demand careers, and industry's need for a 21st century workforce," Creighton said. "The initiative was a unique collaboration and has attracted partners from all over the state. I applaud everyone who worked on this bill, because TRUE will have a generational impact -- and will serve as a model for the rest of the nation to create a pipeline for students, workers and industry."

"Texas is built upon the hard work of dedicated citizens who pour their knowledge, talent, and determination into the workforce every day. The TRUE initiative is an exciting opportunity to open new doors for Texans to develop or retool their skillset, leading to greater employment opportunities and brighter futures," Parker said. "I am excited to offer this important legislation in the Texas House of Representatives and join with my colleague, Senator Brandon Creighton, and the extraordinary community colleges and business leaders who are invested in partnering together for the betterment of Texas' students and a more vibrant workforce that will ensure Texas continues to be the leading state for business in the nation."

The initiative is guided by a new Business Advisory Council comprised of key business and industry leaders. TRUE will leverage existing local business partnerships to effectively scale and advance the work.

"It's a simple concept: align industry needs with quality

training programs that provide Texans with an efficient and effective path to in-demand skills for the 21st century", said Justin Yancy, President of the Texas Business Leadership Council. "Having employers collaborate with the development of new industry-aligned credential programs is a recipe for success and will lead to a more prosperous economy."

The proposal aims to develop new accelerated employment training programs and short-term credentials that lead to living-wage occupations.

Wil Zemp, Director of Education to Workforce Team at AWS said, "AWS is pleased to support the TRUE initiative. We share a common vision about the importance of preparing students for in-demand cloud careers and connecting them to jobs with local employers. We are committed to actively enabling and supporting the Texas community college system to deliver cloud computing education and training in every region of the state to achieve that goal."

The TRUE initiative will strengthen the relationships between community colleges, business partners and philanthropy to ensure a well-prepared workforce for a stronger Texas economy.

"As Texas responds to student needs exacerbated by the pandemic, philanthropy understands the importance of fostering innovation to meet changing workforce demands. We know that leveraging community colleges' expertise, industry partnerships, and labor market data will move us closer to achieving 60x30TX and sustaining thriving communities for all", said Dr. Wynn Rosser, President & CEO, T.L.L. Temple Foundation, Chair of Philanthropy Advocates.

Parker represents Texas House District 63, the southwestern portion of Denton County, and serves as Vice-Chair of the House Committee on Pensions, Investments, and Financial Services and as a member of the House Committee on Higher Education.

Creighton represents Montgomery, Harris, Chambers, Galveston and Jefferson counties, and serves as Chairman of the Senate Committee on Higher Education and Select Committee on Ports.

The bill is filed as SB 1102 in the Senate, and HB 3003 in the House.