



10 W Lafayette Street
Trenton, NJ 08608-
2002

609-393-7707
www.njbia.org

Michele N. Siekerka,
Esq.
President and CEO

Christopher Emigholz
Chief Government
Affairs Officer

Raymond Cantor
Deputy Chief
Government Affairs
Officer

Althea Ford
Vice President

Elissa Frank
Vice President

To: Chairwoman Carter, Vice Chairman Atkins and Members of the Assembly
Higher Education Committee

From: Althea D. Ford, NJBIA Vice President of Government Affairs
(aford@njbia.org)

Date: February 10, 2025

RE: NJBIA Testimony **On Legislation to Codify the New Jersey Career
Pathways to Opportunities Initiative and Direct DOLWD to Develop and
Maintain an Industry Credential List (A-5211, A-5183, A-5182, A-5213)**

On behalf of our member companies that make NJBIA the largest, most impactful association representing job creators in New Jersey, we support the package of bills that codify the work of the New Jersey Career Pathways to Opportunities Initiative and strengthen the operation and impact of New Jersey's community college system:

- A-5211- (Miller/Freiman) Establishes New Jersey Pathways to Career Opportunities Initiative Act.
- A-5183- (Drulis/Verrelli) Directs DOLWD to develop and maintain an industry-valued credential list
- A-5182- (Carter/Murphy) Modernizes responsibilities of the New Jersey Council of County Colleges
- A-5213- (Venezia/Atkins) Establishes the "New Economy Opportunity Skills System Pilot Program" to strengthen alignment and collaboration between local workforce development boards and community colleges; makes appropriation.

The New Jersey Council of Community Colleges has done a remarkable job of coordinating the efforts of our state's 18 community colleges to streamline the implementation of workforce training and programmatic opportunities across our state. This unified approach has led to significant investment, partnership and results. As partners with NJCCC on the New Jersey Pathways to Career Opportunities Initiative, NJBIA has witnessed first-hand the intentional planning, development and deployment of successful and innovative workforce development strategies. The projects supported by this Initiative have inspired new collaborations, such as NJ BioFutures, a new strategic private-public partnership addressing critical workforce concerns in the pharmaceutical and biomanufacturing industries.

As evidenced by the NJ Workplace Literacy and Basic Skills Training Program, which has provided ESL, communications skills, computer skills, and management acumen training to over 230,000 employees since its inception in 2007, the community college system, with NJCCC at the helm, has a track record of fostering positive relationships

with job creators and industry. Codifying this initiative, as proposed in A-5211, signals that New Jersey remains committed to advancing proven strategies that equip our workforce with the skills needed for success.

The development and maintenance of a list of industry-valued credentials, as proposed in A-5183, is a common-sense strategy to keep the State connected with job creators to understand their credentialing needs and establishes an objective metric to demonstrate how the state is currently meeting industry training needs. This list can also inform how the State can strategically invest in future education and training programs.

We also support A-5182 to codify expanded responsibilities of the NJ Council to ensure collaboration across the county college system and A-5213 to establish a pilot program to streamline the work of the county college system and workforce development boards and maximize workforce development investments.

NJBIA is proud to partner with our state's community colleges, an important piece of our higher education and workforce development training ecosystem.

Should you have any questions about our position on this or any other legislation, please feel free to contact me at aford@njbia.org.