



NATIONAL CONFERENCE *of* STATE LEGISLATURES

The Forum for America's Ideas

August 1, 2017

The Honorable John Thune
Chairman, Senate Commerce,
Science & Transportation Committee
512 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Bill Nelson
Ranking Member, Senate Commerce,
Science & Transportation Committee
716 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Daniel T. Blue, JR
*Senate Democratic Leader
North Carolina
President, NCSL*

Raúl E. Burciaga
*Director
Legislative Council Service
New Mexico
Staff Chair, NCSL*

William T. Pound
Executive Director

Dear Chairman Thune and Ranking Member Nelson:

On behalf of our nation's state legislatures, we write to express strong support of S.754, the "Cyber Scholarship Opportunities Act of 2017," and urge the Senate Commerce, Science & Transportation Committee to pass this important legislation. The bill would expand the critical Scholarship for Service program to associate's degrees and provide essential cybersecurity scholarships and supports skills training in a growing sector of the economy.

The Scholarship for Service program benefits states and localities because it permits eligible students obtaining degrees in cybersecurity fields to work for state and local governments as well as the federal government. This program fills a vital need of state government for cybersecurity professionals, and NCSL vigorously supports its expansion to 2-year degree programs. This bill, S.754, further codifies the essential role scholarship for service can play across the states in ensuring that highly-skilled professionals have the opportunity to serve in their state and local governments.

Throughout the legislative process, we have appreciated the opportunity to share our perspective on cyber education and skills development. Cybersecurity training presents a critical need for states and localities. Many states are prioritizing cyber skills development through state university systems and community colleges. While states are growing the skilled workforce needed to meet this challenge, federal support is vital to promoting open jobs across the United States. NCSL supports the bill's requirement that the National Science Foundation work with the Office of Personnel Management, along with state and local governments, to advertise cybersecurity positions to scholarship recipients, as this demonstrates the essential collaborative policy to streamline hiring efforts across the federal and state government to ensure secure networks across the country.

Again, we look forward to working with you to advance this bill, and strongly urge the committee to pass S. 754. We believe this bill presents an important opportunity to develop the skilled workforce that state, local, and federal governments all require. If you have any

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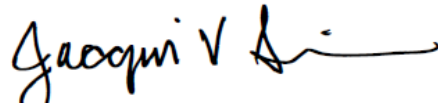
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questions or need further assistance, please contact NCSL staff members Susan Parnas Frederick, at susan.frederick@ncsl.org or Danielle Dean at Danielle.dean@ncsl.org.

Sincerely,

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

Senator Tom Alexander, South Carolina

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jacquie Irwin".

Assemblywoman Jacquie Irwin, California

Co-Chairs, NCSL Executive Task Force on Cybersecurity