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Beyer Introduces STAPLER Act To Support Adult Education Teachers

Idea Was Proposed By A Local Teacher In A Letter To The Congressman

February 11, 2016 (Washington, DC) – Representative Don Beyer introduced the STAPLER Act today to Save Teachers of Adults from Paying out of their Livelihood for Education Resources. Beyer’s legislation would allow certain qualifying program instructors a $500 credit for education resource expenses such as paper, writing materials, printing, and books. Current law disallows continuing and adult education teachers from claiming tax deductions for classroom supplies, even though such deductions are allowed for K-12 teachers.

“Our new, global economy and highly mobile, tech-savvy workforce requires education not limited to the K-12 spectrum,” said Rep. Beyer. “Basic and continuing education courses are indispensable to acquiring the tools needed in the 21st century economy. Covering the cost of basic classroom supplies for these teachers is common sense.”

Ms. Margaret Peterson, a local English for Speakers of Other Languages teacher, initially brought this gap in existing law to Rep. Beyer’s attention in a constituent letter.

“I was disappointed to find out that educational teaching deductions for classroom supplies are limited to K-12. When I was a full-time teacher, that deduction was very helpful. Now that I teach ESOL to adults, part-time, I am still paying out of pocket, but I can't get a tax deduction,” Margaret Peterson said. “Rep. Beyer’s bill will go a long way to recognizing that there are many teachers working outside the K-12 school system, and this will help them with the out of pocket money they spend on books, printers, ink, and paper for their students.”

Many teachers voluntarily use their own money to support their classroom work. Research shows that teachers will spend more of their own funds each year to supply their classrooms and purchase essential items such as pencils. And this is not just limited to K-12 teachers, but principals, aides, and adult educators.
“Despite serving a critical need, adult education programs are typically under-funded, with the majority of states reporting waiting lists for enrollment in publicly-funded programs. This is especially true for adult ESL classes. The STAPLER Act is a step in the right direction, and provides an important benefit to help support teachers working in adult ESL instruction," said Rosa Aronson, Executive Director of the TESOL International Association.

Joe McClary, CEO of the International Association of Continuing Education and Training (IACET), a non-profit organization supporting the bill said, “The bill makes sense because it allows a benefit for adult educators who make a personal out-of-pocket commitment to excellence. We need to encourage investment in quality adult education and this is certainly a good way to do it.”

“It is imperative that we provide support for these adult educators, who are serving such a critical function for this country," said Margaret Eggleston, President of the American Association for Adult and Continuing Education. “In today’s global and highly digitized economy we must support these educators, who are often utilizing their own personal technology and incurring the costs associated with this, as well. In order to remain relevant and competitive, we must nurture our educators’ ability to interact with students on various platforms. This bill supports adult educators in their vision of helping adults acquire the knowledge, skills and values needed to lead productive and satisfying lives.”

ABOUT CONGRESSMAN BEYER:

Creating the new American economy, fighting climate change, ensuring women’s economic empowerment.

Representative Beyer serves on the Joint Economic Committee, the House Committee on Natural Resources, and is Ranking Member on the Oversight Subcommittee to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology. He has run a successful Northern Virginia business for over 40 years, served two terms as Virginia’s Lieutenant Governor, and served as President Obama’s Ambassador to Switzerland and Liechtenstein from 2009 to 2013 where he commissioned a three-year bilateral project on women in the economy with the World Economic Forum and George Washington University.

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