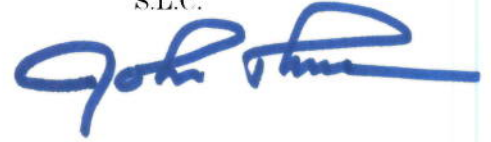


Thune — Substitute

OLL21580 G8V

S.L.C.



AMENDMENT NO. \_\_\_\_\_ Calendar No. \_\_\_\_\_

Purpose: In the nature of a substitute.

**IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES—117th Cong., 1st Sess.**

**S. 163**

To address the workforce needs of the telecommunications industry

Referred to the Committee on \_\_\_\_\_ and ordered to be printed

Ordered to lie on the table and to be printed

AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE intended to be proposed by Mr. THUNE

Viz:

1 Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:  
2

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Telecommunications  
5 Skilled Workforce Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. TELECOMMUNICATIONS INTERAGENCY WORKING  
7 GROUP.**

8 (a) IN GENERAL.—Part I of title III of the Commu-  
9 nications Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 301 et seq.) is amended  
10 by adding at the end the following:

1 **“SEC. 344. TELECOMMUNICATIONS INTERAGENCY WORK-**  
2 **ING GROUP.**

3 “(a) DEFINITION.—In this section, the term ‘tele-  
4 communications interagency working group’ means the  
5 interagency working group established under subsection  
6 (b)(1).

7 “(b) ESTABLISHMENT.—

8 “(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 60 days  
9 after the date of enactment of this section, the  
10 Chairman of the Commission, in consultation with  
11 the Secretary of Labor, shall establish within the  
12 Commission an interagency working group to de-  
13 velop recommendations to address the workforce  
14 needs of the telecommunications industry, including  
15 the safety of that workforce.

16 “(2) DATE OF ESTABLISHMENT.—The tele-  
17 communications interagency working group shall be  
18 considered established on the date on which a major-  
19 ity of the members of the working group have been  
20 appointed, consistent with subsection (d).

21 “(c) DUTIES.—In developing recommendations under  
22 subsection (b), the telecommunications interagency work-  
23 ing group shall—

24 “(1) determine whether, and if so how, any  
25 Federal laws, regulations, guidance, policies, or prac-  
26 tices, or any budgetary constraints, inhibit institu-

1 tions of higher education (as defined in section 101  
2 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C.  
3 1001)) or for-profit businesses from establishing,  
4 adopting, or expanding programs intended to ad-  
5 dress the workforce needs of the telecommunications  
6 industry, including the workforce needed to build  
7 and maintain the 5G wireless infrastructure nec-  
8 essary to support 5G wireless technology;

9 “(2) identify potential policies and programs  
10 that could encourage and improve coordination  
11 among Federal agencies, between Federal agencies  
12 and States, and among States, on telecommuni-  
13 cations workforce needs;

14 “(3) identify ways in which existing Federal  
15 programs, including programs that help facilitate the  
16 employment of veterans and military personnel  
17 transitioning into civilian life, could be leveraged to  
18 help address the workforce needs of the tele-  
19 communications industry;

20 “(4) identify ways to encourage individuals and  
21 for-profit businesses to participate in qualified in-  
22 dustry-led workforce development programs, includ-  
23 ing the Telecommunications Industry Registered Ap-  
24 prenticeship Program;

1           “(5) identify ways to improve recruitment in  
2 qualified industry-led workforce development pro-  
3 grams, including the Telecommunications Industry  
4 Registered Apprenticeship Program and other indus-  
5 try-recognized apprenticeship programs;

6           “(6) identify Federal incentives that could be  
7 provided to institutions of higher education, for-prof-  
8 it businesses, State workforce development boards  
9 established under section 101 of the Workforce In-  
10 novation and Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C. 3111), or  
11 other relevant stakeholders to establish or adopt new  
12 programs, or expand current programs, to address  
13 the workforce needs of the telecommunications in-  
14 dustry, including such needs in rural areas; and

15           “(7) identify ways to improve the safety of tele-  
16 communications workers, including tower climbers.

17           “(d) MEMBERS.—The telecommunications inter-  
18 agency working group shall be composed of the following  
19 representatives of Federal agencies and relevant non-Fed-  
20 eral industry stakeholder organizations:

21           “(1) A representative of the Department of  
22 Education, appointed by the Secretary of Education.

23           “(2) A representative of the National Tele-  
24 communications and Information Administration,

1 appointed by the Assistant Secretary of Commerce  
2 for Communications and Information.

3 “(3) A representative of the Commission, ap-  
4 pointed by the Chairman of the Commission.

5 “(4) A representative of the Telecommuni-  
6 cations Industry Registered Apprenticeship Pro-  
7 gram, appointed by the Secretary of Labor.

8 “(5) A representative of a telecommunications  
9 industry association, appointed by the Chairman of  
10 the Commission.

11 “(6) A representative of an Indian Tribe or  
12 Tribal organization, appointed by the Chairman of  
13 the Commission.

14 “(7) A representative of a rural telecommuni-  
15 cations carrier, appointed by the Chairman of the  
16 Commission.

17 “(8) A representative of a telecommunications  
18 contractor firm, appointed by the Chairman of the  
19 Commission.

20 “(9) A representative of a minority institution  
21 (as defined in section 365 of the Higher Education  
22 Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1067k)), appointed by the  
23 Secretary of Education.

1           “(10) A public interest advocate for tower  
2 climber safety, appointed by the Chairman of the  
3 Commission.

4           “(11) A representative of the Directorate of  
5 Construction of the Occupational Safety and Health  
6 Administration, appointed by the Secretary of  
7 Labor.

8           “(12) A representative of a labor organization  
9 representing the telecommunications workforce, ap-  
10 pointed by the Chairman of the Commission.

11          “(c) NO COMPENSATION.—A member of the tele-  
12 communications interagency working group shall serve  
13 without compensation.

14          “(f) OTHER MATTERS.—

15           “(1) CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR.—The tele-  
16 communications interagency working group shall  
17 name a chair and a vice chair, who shall be respon-  
18 sible for organizing the business of the working  
19 group.

20           “(2) SUBGROUPS.—The chair and vice chair of  
21 the telecommunications interagency working group,  
22 in consultation with the other members of the tele-  
23 communications interagency working group, may es-  
24 tablish such subgroups as necessary to help conduct

1 the work of the telecommunications interagency  
2 working group.

3 “(3) SUPPORT.—The Commission or the Sec-  
4 retary of Labor may detail an employee of the Com-  
5 mission or the Department of Labor, respectively, to  
6 assist and support the work of the telecommuni-  
7 cations interagency working group, though such a  
8 detailee shall not be considered to be a member of  
9 the working group.

10 “(g) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—

11 “(1) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Not later than 1  
12 year after the date on which the telecommunications  
13 interagency working group is established, the work-  
14 ing group shall submit a report containing its rec-  
15 ommendations to address the workforce needs of the  
16 telecommunications industry to—

17 “(A) the Committee on Commerce,  
18 Science, and Transportation of the Senate;

19 “(B) the Committee on Health, Education,  
20 Labor, and Pensions of the Senate;

21 “(C) the Committee on Energy and Com-  
22 merce of the House of Representatives;

23 “(D) the Committee on Education and  
24 Labor of the House of Representatives;

25 “(E) the Department of Labor; and

1 “(F) the Commission.

2 “(2) MAJORITY SUPPORT.—The telecommuni-  
3 cations interagency working group may not submit  
4 the report under paragraph (1) unless the report has  
5 the support of not less than the majority of the  
6 members of the working group.

7 “(3) VIEWS.—The telecommunications inter-  
8 agency working group shall—

9 “(A) include with the report submitted  
10 under paragraph (1) any concurring or dis-  
11 senting view offered by a member of the work-  
12 ing group; and

13 “(B) identify each member to whom each  
14 concurring or dissenting view described in sub-  
15 paragraph (A) should be attributed.

16 “(4) PUBLIC POSTING.—The Commission and  
17 the Secretary of Labor shall make a copy of the re-  
18 port submitted under paragraph (1) available to the  
19 public on the websites of the Commission and the  
20 Department of Labor, respectively.

21 “(h) NONAPPLICABILITY OF FOIA.—The Federal  
22 Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App.) shall not apply  
23 to the telecommunications interagency working group.”.

24 (b) SUNSET.—Section 344 of the Communications  
25 Act of 1934, as added by subsection (a), shall be repealed



1 on the day after the date on which the interagency work-  
2 ing group established under subsection (b)(1) of that sec-  
3 tion submits the report to Congress under subsection (g)  
4 of that section.

5 **SEC. 3. TELECOMMUNICATIONS WORKFORCE GUIDANCE.**

6 Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment  
7 of this Act, the Secretary of Labor, in consultation with  
8 the Chairman of the Federal Communications Commis-  
9 sion, shall establish and issue guidance on how States can  
10 address the workforce needs and safety of the tele-  
11 communications industry, including guidance on how a  
12 State workforce development board established under sec-  
13 tion 101 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act  
14 (29 U.S.C. 3111) can—

15 (1) utilize Federal resources available to States  
16 to meet the workforce needs of the telecommuni-  
17 cations industry;

18 (2) promote and improve recruitment in quali-  
19 fied industry-led workforce development programs,  
20 including the Telecommunications Industry Reg-  
21 istered Apprenticeship Program; and

22 (3) ensure the safety of the telecommunications  
23 workforce, including tower climbers.

1 **SEC. 4. GAO ASSESSMENT OF WORKFORCE NEEDS OF THE**  
 2 **TELECOMMUNICATIONS INDUSTRY.**

3 (a) **DEFINITIONS.**—In this section, the term “appro-  
 4 priate congressional committees” means—

5 (1) the Committee on Commerce, Science, and  
 6 Transportation of the Senate;

7 (2) the Committee on Health, Education,  
 8 Labor, and Pensions of the Senate;

9 (3) the Committee on Energy and Commerce of  
 10 the House of Representatives; and

11 (4) the Committee on Education and Labor of  
 12 the House of Representatives.

13 (b) **REPORT.**—Not later than 180 days after the date  
 14 of enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the  
 15 United States shall submit to the appropriate congress-  
 16 sional committees a report that estimates the number of  
 17 skilled telecommunications workers that will be required  
 18 to build and maintain—

19 (1) broadband infrastructure in rural areas, in-  
 20 cluding estimates based on—

21 (A) current need; and

22 (B) projected need, if Congress enacts leg-  
 23 islation that accelerates broadband infrastruc-  
 24 ture construction in the United States; and

25 (2) the wireless infrastructure needed to sup-  
 26 port 5G wireless technology.