

Building a 21st Century Workforce: Senator Lucy Haskins (D-OH)

You are the senior Senator from Ohio and a proud small business owner. You made a name for yourself by shepherding bipartisan tax credit legislation years ago through the Senate and House which helped you to secure the Chair of the Finance Committee. You have become a financial expert and have been one of the few Democrats to maintain solid small business support in the Midwest. In fact, the Small Business Association of Ohio (SBAO) has given you an “A” rating for the past 10 years. The rating is seen as an indicator of support, and you know your solid relationship with SBAO’s President has made a long-term partnership with the SBAO possible and fruitful for both sides. While to some members these ratings matter less than they once did, for you, this rating is key. Not only does it indicate an important relationship, but you’re one of only a handful of Democrats to receive an “A” from the SBAO. Their members reliably turn out for elections and have a very far reach due to their popular magazine. You’re excited for the upcoming year because you plan to stick to what you know in a tough election cycle: getting money back into the pockets of those who deserve it.

Now that your party is in the Majority, you’ve been working to champion major pieces of legislation. You have been working on a three-year tax credit bill and have secured your Caucus’s support for most of the provisions and lined up tentative support across the aisle. While you’re actively shaping this piece of legislation as well, and definitely hope to introduce it soon, you are first introducing yet another key piece of bipartisan legislation that seems far more pressing to help support local businesses and retrain displaced workers in Rust Belt States: Building a 21st Century Workforce. Your state, Ohio, has been hit particularly hard by the exodus of American manufacturing jobs. You fashioned an alliance with Senators from three other Rust Belt States, two Republicans and one Democrat, and with their support you are thrilled that you have been able to secure \$60 million dollars in community training grants, \$15 million of which would go to your home state of Ohio to retrain displaced workers. You and other Rust Belt allies wanted more to go to Rust Belt States but you encountered strong opposition from Republicans who opposed big government expenditures.

You want to make sure you have various key stakeholders fully on board before moving forward. Your Caucus is supportive of this bill but also wants to make sure local small business supports this legislation. While some of your colleagues delegate the discussion of specific legislative provisions to their staff, you value your relationship with Victor Chang, the President of the Small Business Association

This Confidential Information was written by Brian Mandell, Mohamed Kamal Senior Lecturer in Negotiation and Public Policy, and Monica Giannone, Program Director of the Harvard Kennedy School Negotiation Project, at the John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University (HKS) as part of the Harvard Kennedy School’s “Teaching Legislative Negotiation Project.” Funding for this simulation was provided by The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. HKS simulations are developed solely as the basis for class discussion. They are not intended to serve as endorsements, sources of primary data, or illustrations of effective or ineffective management.

Copyright © 2019 President and Fellows of Harvard College.



This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/>; or, (b) send a letter to Creative Commons, 171 2nd Street, Suite 300, San Francisco, California, 94105, USA.

of Ohio, and want to deal with him directly. As you move into your meeting with Victor, you are a bit more anxious than normal because your relationship with small businesses has been tense as the impacts of a new national healthcare policy have come into effect. Despite your expectations that the average small business owner would not see rising costs, small businesses in your state have been hurting. Even though the costs don't add up to much, approximately \$3,000 per small business, they have hurt those who were already struggling.

You are nervous Victor will request that you take a more activist stance against the national healthcare policy to maintain their support, especially since you voted for the healthcare legislation and still strongly support it. A potential Republican challenger to your re-election has been actively campaigning on this message. He says that while you used to be the champion of small business, you aren't anymore, and it's time for Ohio to "Lose Lucy." It is essential that you get the SBAO's support on this piece of legislation today. However, it is also essential that you do not commit to making any statements about healthcare that you do not agree with. You voted for the former President's healthcare legislation and believe that the benefits continue to outweigh the costs, but you would rather not say this quite so directly to the SBAO. You'll have to tread lightly. If the SBAO were to downgrade your rating from "A", you know that it would seriously jeopardize your reelection and give your assumed challenger a big boost ahead of the campaign. The SBAO is important to you, and both this legislation and your career would be in serious danger if anything changes in this relationship.

You have a great package to present to SBAO, however. The \$15 million in community training grants will go a long way back home. You have heard the SBAO's concern that many of the displaced workers are unskilled, and more advanced training is required. This package provides for training to workers who have lost their jobs and need training for additional work. Your team has been working tirelessly to put this package together, and they assure you \$15 million is enough to adequately train workers to be ready for new industry jobs. It will cover setting up the program, operating costs, a modest stipend for workers, and other costs associated with administering the grant. You tried to secure more than \$15 million in funding but unfortunately weren't able to. While you wish you could have gotten even more for workers back home, you are comfortable that this is enough to manage the training well. You hope this meeting will be quick and easy, and you can keep it away from healthcare-related issues.

You need to come out of the meeting today securing the SBAO's support on this piece of legislation. You need to also make sure you do not push away their support, you'll need it in the upcoming race.