

# Awareness. Advocacy. Action.



SHRM Government Affairs 2025 Highlights



# Delivering Impact for Workers and Workplaces

As we close out 2025, I am incredibly proud of the impact SHRM and our member advocates delivered together for work, workers, and workplaces.

This year, SHRM elevated HR's voice at every level of government. We engaged a new administration with bold, data-driven policy insights and launched our first HR Policy Boot Camp on Capitol Hill to give congressional staff practical, real-world perspectives on today's workplace challenges. When our President and CEO, Johnny C. Taylor, Jr., SHRM-SCP, testified before Congress and described America's education-to-employment pipeline as "leaky, broken, and busted," it reinforced the urgency behind our launch of SHRM's Education-to-Employment (E<sup>2</sup>) Initiative—a national framework aligning education, skills, and workforce needs.

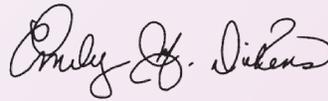
We delivered meaningful federal policy wins, including permanent tax-free tuition and student loan repayment, expanded family leave tax credits, long-term telehealth flexibility, and higher Dependent Care flexible spending account (FSA) limits beginning in 2026. Across the states, SHRM members continued to lead with credibility, hosting advocacy days, testifying before lawmakers, and advancing responsible solutions on workforce development and emerging technologies.

This year also marked a major milestone for grassroots engagement. We expanded SHRM's A-Team to all members and activated advocates in 31 states through our August In-District Campaign, engaging more than 90 lawmakers in bipartisan conversations about the future of work.

Globally, SHRM strengthened its presence at the United Nations and expanded partnerships across Africa, Europe, and beyond—including new strategic alliances across five African nations to build HR capacity and support workforce growth worldwide.

We began 2025 responding to change. We end the year leading from the front—focused, prepared, and committed to what matters most. Because the policies that shape work, workers, and workplaces happen when voices like yours show up. As we look ahead to 2026, our commitment remains unwavering: SHRM will always lead with policy, not politics, and we will continue championing the issues that matter most to HR and the people we serve.

Thank you for your leadership, your advocacy, and your partnership. Together, we are shaping better workplaces for a better world.



Emily M. Dickens, J.D.  
Chief Administrative Officer  
SHRM



## SHRM Launches E<sup>2</sup> Initiative to Strengthen the Education to Employment Pipeline

SHRM’s Education to Employment (E<sup>2</sup>) Initiative is a national framework designed to close the skills gap by better aligning education, workforce development, and employer needs through coordinated awareness, advocacy, and action. At SHRM25, Chief Administrative Officer, Emily M. Dickens, J.D., formally launched the initiative, expanding SHRM’s advocacy tools to all members and empowering HR professionals to help shape policy and strengthen talent pathways.



Earlier this year, SHRM President and CEO Johnny C. Taylor, Jr., reinforced the urgency of this work in testimony before the House Committee on Education and the Workforce, calling the education to employment system “leaky, broken, and busted,” and urging Congress to advance skills-based hiring, paid apprenticeships, and reauthorization of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

SHRM advanced these same priorities globally at the 2025 Global Conference on Human Resources in Africa in Accra, Ghana, working alongside policymakers, educators, and employers to promote workforce readiness and digital transformation worldwide.



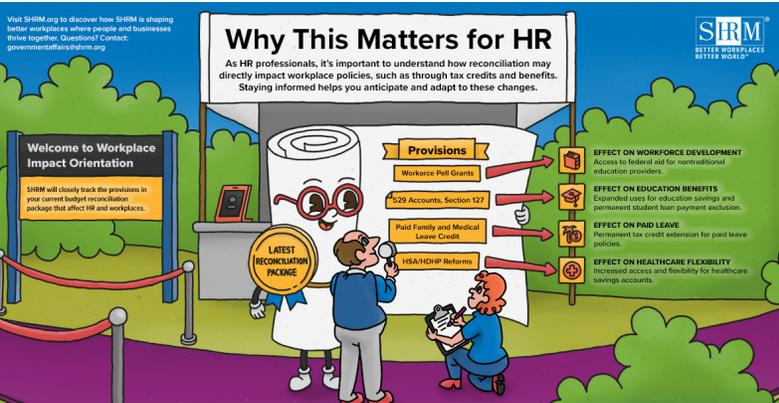
## SHRM A-Team Members Lead with Workplace Policy Expertise Before Policymakers

SHRM’s A-Team member advocates play a critical role in advancing workplace policy by bringing real-world HR expertise directly to policymakers at federal and state levels. In 2025, Paige Boughan, SHRM-SCP, testified before the House Subcommittee on Workforce Protections on wage modernization, urging updates to the Fair Labor Standards Act to reflect today’s workplace realities, expand workforce participation, and support innovation-driven growth.



In California, Patricia Leyva testified in support of Assembly Bill 386 to create a tax credit for employers offering student loan repayment assistance, highlighting the role of meaningful benefits in attracting and retaining talent amid rising education costs. Hedy Holmes testified in opposition to Assembly Bill 1221, cautioning that broad restrictions on employee monitoring and automated systems could hinder responsible innovation, while SHRM’s advocacy team reinforced the importance of balanced privacy protections that safeguard workers and preserve effective, inclusive workplace practices.

## SHRM Secures Major Workforce Wins in Congressional Reconciliation Package



SHRM secured major federal policy victories in 2025 with the passage of H.R. 1, the One Big Beautiful Bill Act, advancing multiple SHRM-backed priorities that strengthened benefits, supported caregivers, and expanded workforce development. The law extended and enhanced the Paid Family and Medical Leave Tax Credit, expanded 529 accounts to cover industry-recognized credentialing, and improved both the employer-provided childcare credit and the child and dependent care tax credit, giving employers and HR professionals new tools to support working families and boost workforce participation.

The law also made permanent the employer student loan repayment exclusion and established Workforce Pell Grants for short-term, career-focused education programs, reinforcing pathways for upskilling and career mobility. Together, these wins provided HR leaders with greater flexibility to invest in employee well-being, strengthen talent pipelines, and address caregiving, education, and financial challenges—underscoring SHRM’s leadership in advancing practical, bipartisan workforce policy.

## From Albany to Sacramento: SHRM Members Drive State Workplace Policy

SHRM members in New York and California elevated the voice of HR in state capitals this year through two high-impact Advocacy Days focused on the future of work. In Albany, SHRM and the New York SHRM State Council hosted the Second Annual New York State Advocacy Day, where members engaged lawmakers on responsible AI, balanced noncompete policies, and expanding employment opportunities for untapped talent pools. Dickens also met with key state leaders, including Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins and other legislators.



On the West Coast, nearly 100 SHRM California members gathered at the State Capitol in Sacramento for one of the council’s most well-attended Advocacy Days, meeting with policymakers on ethical AI use, next-generation workforce development, and fair approaches to workplace surveillance. Across both states, SHRM reinforced the power of sustained HR engagement in shaping practical, people-centered policies that strengthen workers and workplaces.





## SHRM Equips Capitol Hill Staff with Practical HR Policy Expertise

In April, SHRM hosted its HR Policy Boot Camp on Capitol Hill, delivering a targeted workforce policy briefing for congressional staff. Held with Reps. Don Davis (D-NC-01) and Don Bacon (R-NE-02), the session connected real-world HR challenges to practical policy solutions and reinforced SHRM's role as a trusted resource for lawmakers.

The briefing addressed SHRM's 2025 public policy priorities, including AI's impact on jobs and workplace decision-making, evolving compliance under the FMLA and ADA, and the growing role of flexible work in recruitment and retention. SHRM's HR Knowledge Center complemented the discussion with practical guidance on managing workforce trends, strengthening employee engagement, and fostering workplace civility.

## SHRM Expands Global Leadership on the Future of Work and Workforce Policy

SHRM strengthened its global policy presence in 2025 through key engagements at the United Nations and across Europe focused on the future of work, pay equity, and responsible technology. At the U.N. Commission on the Status of Women, SHRM co-hosted a luncheon with the International Organization of Employers (IOE) on closing the digital divide and the role of technology in shaping inclusive workplaces, with Dickens reinforcing SHRM's commitment to pay equity through audits and transparent compensation practices.



In Europe, SHRM launched the first findings from its Global Worker Project in Berlin, sharing worker insights from 16 countries. SHRM further elevated HR's global voice at the Global Solutions Summit and the IOE Conference on Business and Human Rights in Bonn, where Dickens moderated a discussion on the EU's Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive, applying SHRM's Clarity, Consistency, Compliance framework.

The week concluded at USCIB Geneva Week, reinforcing the critical role of HR in shaping global labor standards and responsible workplace practices.



## SHRM Convenes Workforce Roundtable with U.S. Labor Secretary

In June, SHRM President and CEO Johnny C. Taylor, Jr., and Chief Administrative Officer, Emily M. Dickens, J.D. hosted a roundtable in New York City with U.S. Labor Secretary Lori Chavez-DeRemer and leading CHROs as part of the Secretary’s America at Work listening tour. The discussion created a direct forum for HR and business leaders to share real-time insights on the challenges and opportunities shaping today’s workforce.

Participants explored strategies to strengthen workforce development through skills training, apprenticeships, and career-aligned education programs, while also examining federal labor policies that support both workers and employers. The event reinforced SHRM’s role as a trusted convener connecting policymakers and HR leaders to advance forward-looking, people-centered workforce policy.

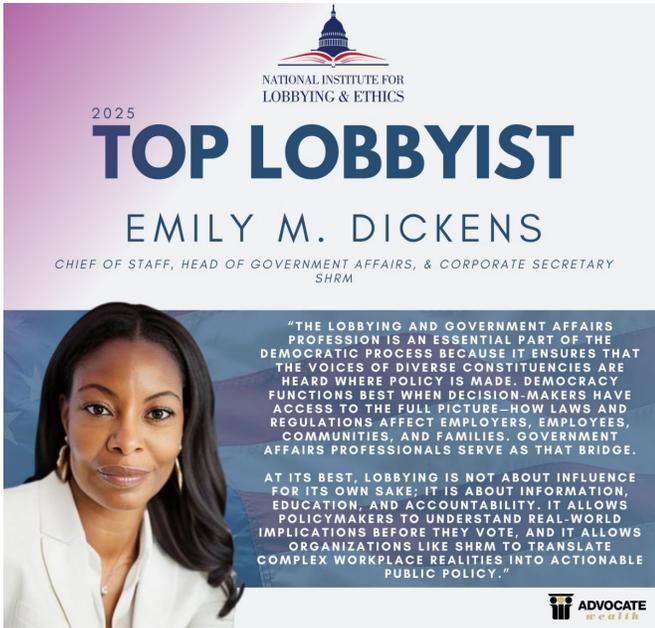


## SHRM Expands Global Footprint with New African HR Association Alliances

In October, SHRM announced new strategic membership partnership partnerships with five national HR associations in Africa: The Chartered Institute of Human Resource Management in Ghana, the Tanzania Human Resource and Administration Professionals Association, the Institute of People Management of Zimbabwe, the Rwanda Human Resources Management Organization, and the Institute of Human Resource Management in Kenya. Together, these alliances expand access to SHRM’s research, certification programs, and professional development resources for HR professionals across the continent. The partnerships build on SHRM’s growing engagement in Africa and mark a significant step forward in elevating HR standards and strengthening professional capacity across Africa.



## SHRM Government Affairs Team Recognized for Policy Leadership



Emily M. Dickens, J.D., SHRM Chief Administrative Officer, was named a 2025 Top Lobbyist by the National Institute for Lobbying and Ethics. This honor recognized professionals who demonstrated exceptional leadership, integrity, and impact in ethical advocacy.

Under Dickens’ leadership, SHRM solidified its role as a trusted, nonpartisan voice on the future of work. She spearheaded initiatives to modernize workplace policy and elevate HR’s influence on issues such as artificial intelligence, workforce readiness, and education-to-employment pathways. Her work advanced SHRM’s mission to improve both work and the lives of workers globally through policy-driven solutions.

Sean McIntosh, SHRM senior advisor for member advocacy and government affairs operations, was also recognized, earning a spot among The Advocacy Association’s Top 20 Advocacy Professionals for 2025. This distinction highlighted leaders who drove innovation and measurable impact in advocacy.



## SHRM Advances AI Education and Workforce Readiness at Federal and State Levels

SHRM advanced national leadership on responsible artificial intelligence and workforce preparedness through high-impact engagement at both the federal and state levels. In September, SHRM President and CEO Johnny C. Taylor, Jr., participated in the White House Task Force on AI Education, joining federal leaders and private-sector partners to launch the Presidential AI Challenge for K–12 students. SHRM underscored the need for foundational AI literacy, employer-informed learning pathways, and stronger partnerships between schools, employers, and workforce boards to prepare students for a technology-driven labor market.



At the state level, SHRM California Deputy Director Tara Fournier testified before the California Senate Select Committee on Economic Development and Technological Innovation. Citing SHRM research showing rapid growth in HR’s use of AI—from 26% to 43% in a year—she highlighted AI’s role in improving recruitment, expanding access to diverse talent, and reducing hiring costs. Fournier emphasized balancing innovation with fairness, warning against overregulation while advocating for lifelong learning, employer-led training, and public-private collaboration.

Across both engagements, SHRM reinforced HR’s central role in shaping ethical AI practices and strengthening pathways from education to employment, ensuring today’s workforce is ready for the future.

## SHRM Delivers Results Through State Policy Advocacy

In 2025, SHRM advanced a strategic state advocacy agenda across the nation, working with state councils and policymakers to modernize workforce systems, expand talent pipelines, and protect effective employer practices. In California, SHRM supported AB 1098 to establish an Education Interagency Council, SB 638 to modernize Career Technical Education programs, and AB 338 to direct workforce funds toward rebuilding and reskilling efforts in wildfire-impacted communities. SHRM also successfully opposed AB 1018, which would have imposed broad new requirements on automated decision systems in employment.

In North Carolina, SHRM successfully supported the enactment of S. 124, the State Hiring Accessibility and Modernization Act, expanding access to state employment opportunities—particularly for veterans and National Guard members—and advancing skills-based hiring across state agencies.



In New York, SHRM supported S. 4358, expanding veterans' tuition award transferability, and S. 4511/A33, establishing a task force to expand employment opportunities for people with disabilities. Both measures were advanced by the Legislature and sent to the Governor for consideration.

Additionally, SHRM extended its momentum from 2024 by successfully opposing “right to disconnect” legislation in Maryland, Kentucky, and Vermont after blocking the nation’s first statewide mandate in California the prior year.



## DOL Advisory Opinion Validates SHRM’s ERISA Advocacy

SHRM’s advocacy is multifaceted, shaping workplace policy through regulatory engagement before rules were issued and guiding courts once laws were implemented. In 2025, SHRM reinforced its leadership on key cases involving the Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA) through participation in *Shafer v. Morgan Stanley* (Second Circuit) and *Milligan v. Bank of America* (Fourth Circuit), ensuring courts considered the broader workforce implications of their decisions.

A major development came from the Department of Labor’s Employee Benefits Security Administration, which issued an advisory opinion reflecting the arguments in SHRM’s *Morgan Stanley* amicus brief. Both SHRM and the DOL emphasized that ERISA was never intended to cover all incentive programs, reaffirming exemptions for bonus and retention plans and cautioning against retroactive designations. Through these efforts, SHRM amplified members’ voices and promoted clear, consistent workplace policies.



SHRM is a member-driven catalyst for creating better workplaces where people and businesses thrive together. As the trusted authority on all things work, SHRM is the foremost expert, researcher, advocate, and thought leader on issues and innovations impacting today’s evolving workplaces. With nearly 340,000 members in 180 countries, SHRM touches the lives of more than 362 million workers and their families globally. Discover more at [SHRM.org](https://www.shrm.org).

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