

November 18, 2016

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Chairman
Senate Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Harold Rogers
Chairman
House Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Ranking Member
House Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Cochran, Ranking Member Mikulski, Chairman Rogers, and Ranking Member Lowey:

As you work to finalize Fiscal Year 2017 appropriations for the U.S. Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education (Labor-HHS), we urge you to include adequate investments in workforce training, apprenticeship, adult basic education, career and technical education, and financial aid for low-income working learners so that U.S. workers and businesses have access to the skills they need to compete and prosper.

There has never been a more important time to invest in America. The growing economy is making it harder for businesses to find skilled hires, with a recent survey suggesting as many as 70 percent of businesses are experiencing difficulties in staffing up – up from just 50 percent of companies in 2013. When U.S. businesses cannot fill skilled job openings, they cannot take advantage of emerging opportunities that could lead to further job creation. And when U.S. workers don't have access to skill development, they lose opportunities to improve their economic circumstances.

With the enactment and implementation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), and potential reauthorizations of the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act and Higher Education Act, we have the policies in place to respond to these needs – but we cannot build on this infrastructure without vital federal funding to take these innovative strategies to scale.

We look forward to working together to prioritize investments in the skills of the U.S. workforce and American competitiveness. Specifically, we should:

1. **Invest in the skills of America's workforce, including fully funding the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and the Older Americans Act:** To ensure workers and businesses have the skills to compete, we should fund both formula and national grant programs at or above authorized levels. We should:
 - Fund WIOA Title I employment and training programs at least at current levels – as approved by the House committee - so states, local areas and other partners in the public workforce system can fully realize the bipartisan vision outlined by WIOA.

- Maintain funding for adult education and literacy programs under Title II of WIOA at current levels to ensure that Americans with low basic skills are able to strengthen their educational levels in order to take advantage of emerging economic opportunities. OECD research shows 36 million adults in the U.S. have low basic skills, yet current funding only serves about 1.5 million participants a year.
- Fund Wagner/Peyser Employment Services (ES) activities under Title III of WIOA at current levels to give states necessary additional resources to provide WIOA's intensive reemployment services while implementing the new law.
- Fund the vocational rehabilitation program and other employment services under WIOA Title IV for adults and students with disabilities at least at current levels. Substantial changes to Title IV require important updates to our workforce development system's service delivery to individuals with disabilities.
- Fund expanded apprenticeship by renewing the \$90 million investment Congress made in 2016. Apprenticeship is a proven strategy by which workers can earn middle-skill credentials and increase earnings up to \$300,000 over the course of their career when compared to those who don't complete apprenticeships. And 94% of employers running programs recommend apprenticeship to other employers.
- Fund job training and employment services for older workers and veterans authorized through the Older Americans Act and other laws at no less than level funding.

2. **Maintain Funding to support Career and Technical Education:** The Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act (Perkins) supports our nation's high schools, technical centers and community colleges in developing the highly skilled workforce demanded by employers. But the program has been cut by over \$140 million since FY 2010 – and many states are receiving grant allocations at or below FY 1998 levels. Federal workforce and education investments must be targeted to ensure that jobseekers can access high-quality training that results in market-ready skills and credentials, and to support employers' engagement in aligning training with their skill requirements. We should at least maintain current year funding levels.
3. **Reinstate year-round Pell to help low-income working learners advance:** Reinstating year-round Pell would allow students to receive Pell throughout the entire academic year, an essential option for low-income working learners who attend school throughout the year. By making Pell Grants available year-round, many students will have enough resources to persist or accelerate their learning, and no longer need to take on additional student debt. We urge you to adopt the year-round Pell reinstatement language included in the Senate Labor-Health and Human Services-Education (L-HHS-ED) appropriations bill.

Thank you for your attention to these critical issues. We look forward to working with you to ensure that our investments in the U.S. workforce meet the needs and aspirations of America's workers and businesses.

Sincerely,

1199NE Training and Upgrading Fund, CT
1199SEIU Training & Employment Funds, NY, NJ, MA, MD, DC, FL
Accounting for Change, LLC, MD
AccuRounds, MA
Adult and Community Educators of Florida, FL
Adult Learning Partners, NY
Advance CTE, MD
Aerospace Machinist Joint Training Committee, WA
Ajax Metal Forming Solutions, MN
Alternative Center for Education, WI
American Boat Builders & Repairers Association, RI
American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO, DC
Angelina College, TX
Arapahoe/Douglas Works!, CO
Arizona Association for Lifelong Learning, AZ
Asian Neighborhood Design, CA
Association for Career and Technical Education, VA
Association of Baltimore Area Grantmakers , MD
Association of Farmworker Opportunity Programs, DC
Benchstrength Inc., AR
BEST - Hospitality Training, MA
Boulder Valley Family Literacy, CO
Burke County Literacy Council, NC
Burlington County Workforce Development Board, NJ
Business Leaders United for Workforce Partnerships, DC
Business U, Inc., CA
California Workforce Development Board, CA
California EDGE Campaign, CA
California Labor Federation, CA
California Workforce Association, CA
Calumet Area Industrial Commission, IL
Cape & Islands Workforce Investment Board, MA
Career Connect Metro West, IL
Career Counselors' Consortium, MA
CareerEdge Funders Collaborative, FL
Catalent Pharma Solutions, IL
Cattaraugus-Allegany Workforce Development Board, NY
Central Iowa Workforce Development Board, IA
Central Iowa Works, IA
Centro Hispano Milwaukee, WI
Chautauqua Works Workforce Development Board, NY
Chenango, Delaware & Otsego Workforce Development Board, Inc., NY
Chicago Jobs Council, IL
Chicagoland Workforce Funder Alliance, IL
Chinese Progressive Association, MA
Church World Service- Durham, NC

City of Albany Department of Youth & Workforce Services, NY
Commission on Adult Basic Education, NY
Colorado Construction Institute - Denver YouthBuild, CO
Commission on Adult Basic Education, DC
Community College Consortium for Immigrant Education, NY
Corporation for a Skilled Workforce, MI
Cortland County, NY
Council for Adult and Experiential Learning, IL
CWEE, Empowering Lives, CO
DC Fiscal Policy Institute, DC
Diego & Son Printing, CA
Digital Promise, DC
District 1199C Training & Upgrading Fund, PA
East Central Area Literacy Council, MO
Eastern Carolina Workforce Development Board, Inc., NC
Easterseals, DC
Education Center of Rising Sun, IN
EMPath, MA
Employ Milwaukee Inc, WI
Employment & Employer Services, IL
Employment and Training Services, NJ
Festo Didactic, Inc., NJ
Five Star Development, Inc., PA
Fulton, Montgomery, and Schoharie Counties Workforce Development Board, Inc., NY
Garraty Workforce Investment, PA
Goodwill of North Georgia, GA
Greater Pittsburgh Literacy Council, PA
Greater Washington Workforce Development Collaborative, DC
H-CAP, NY
Hamilton-Fulton-Montgomery BOCES, NY
HEA Adult Education, IN
Henderson Community College - Adult Learning Center, KY
Hospitality Training Academy Los Angeles, CA
International Association of Jewish Vocational Services, PA
IBEW Local 363/Hudson Valley NECA, NY
Immigrant Integration Lab, Boston College, MA
Indiana Association for Adult & Continuing Education, IN
Indiana Institute for Working Families, IN
Indiana Skills2Compete Coalition, IN
Indo-American Center, IL
Indy Reads, IN
Insight Center for Community Economic Development, CA
Institute for Educational Leadership, DC
Instituto del Progreso Latino, IL
International Association of Jewish Vocational Services, PA
Jackson Area Manufacturers Association, MI

Jefferson-Lewis Workforce Development Board, NY
Jennings County Education Center, IN
Jersey Cape Diagnostic Training & Opportunity Center, NJ
Jewish Family and Career Services, KY
Jewish Vocational Service (Boston), MA
Jewish Vocational Service (San Francisco), CA
Job Opportunities Task Force, MD
JVS San Francisco, CA
Kershaw County Adult Education in South Carolina, SC
Kirkwood Community College, IA
Kostis Kosmos Inc., NY
Labor Institute for Training, Inc., IN
Larkin Street Youth Services, CA
LeadersUp, IL
Levin Energy Partners, LLC, MI
Literacy Assistance Center, NY
Literacy Council of Northern Virginia, VA
Literacy Green Bay, Inc, WI
Literacy NY Buffalo Niagara Inc., NY
Literacy Services of Wisconsin, WI
Literacy Volunteers of White County, IN
Literacy Works, IL
LiteracyCNY, NY
Local Initiatives Support Corporation, NY
Longview Economic Development Corporation, TX
Marine Industry Training & Education Council, FL
Massachusetts YouthBuild Coalition, MA
McDowell Education Center, IN
McHenry County Workforce Network, IL
Members Assistance Program Inc., NY
Metro Atlanta Chamber, GA
Michigan league for Public Policy, MI
Mid-East Career and technology Centers ABLE, OH
Middle Peninsula Regional Adult & Career Education, VA
Morris/Sussex/Warren Employment & Training Services, NJ
MSD of Warren Township, IN
National Able Network, Inc., IL
National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity, MD
National Association for Hispanic Elderly, CA
National Association of Development Organizations, DC
National Center for Families Learning, KY
National Coalition for Literacy, DC
National Council for Adult Education, NY
National Council for Workforce Education, LA
National Council of La Raza, DC
National Fund for Workforce Solutions, DC

National Higher Education Benchmarking Institute, KS
National Immigration Law Center, CA
National Skills Coalition, DC
National Tooling and Machining Association, OH
National Youth Employment Coalition, DC
ND Department of Career and Technical Education, ND
New Castle Career Center, IN
New York City Employment and Training Coalition, NY
New York City Mayor's Office of Workforce Development, NY
North American Die Casting Association, IL
North Carolina Community College System, NC
North Country Workforce Development Board, NY
North Louisiana Economic Partnership, LA
North Shore Community Action Programs, MA
Northeast Minnesota Office of Job Training, MN
Northeast Missouri Workforce Development Board, MO
NW Wisconsin Workforce Investment Board, WI
NY Association of Training & Employment Professionals, NY
Oahu WorkLinks, HI
OAI, Inc., IL
Oakland Private Industry Council, CA
Ocean County PIC, Inc., NJ
Orange County ETA, NY
PAACE, PA
Page Forward Volunteers for Literacy in Clark County, WI
Partners for a Competitive Workforce, OH
Partnerships for a Skilled Workforce, MA
Pearl River Community College, MS
Pennsylvania Workforce Development Association, PA
Per Scholas, NY
Paraprofessional Healthcare Institute, NY
Pima Community College, AZ
Pittsburg Adult Education Center, CA
Polytech Adult Education, DE
Port Jobs, WA
Portland Community College Career Pathways, OR
Precision Machined Products Association, OH
Precision Metalforming Association, OH
Pretty Good Consulting, Inc. CO
Project Learn of Summit County, OH
ProLiteracy, NY
Ready to Work Business Collaborative, NY
Regional Adult & Career Education Program, VA
Rhode Island Adult Education Professional Development Center, RI
River Valley Resources, IN
RochesterWorks, Inc., NY

Sales Huddle Group, NY
Seattle Jobs Initiative, WA
Second Start, NH
Seeds of Literacy, OH
Self-Help for the Elderly, CA
SEMCA Michigan Works, MI
Service Workers Training and Education Partnership, DC
Sheila Maguire Consulting, NY
Skills for Chicagoland's Future, IL
SkillsUSA, VA
SkillWorks, MA
SLATE American Job Center , MO
Solano County Adult Education Consortium, CA
South Seattle College - Georgetown Campus, WA
Southeast Community Services, IN
Southwest Economic Solutions, MI
Spring Institute for Intercultural Learning, CO
Symbol Training Institute, IL
The Association for Manufacturing Technology, VA
The Bell Policy Center, CO
The Center for Economic & Workforce Development-Kingsborough Community College, NY
The Center for Working Families, GA
The International Institute of St. Louis, MO
The Literacy Alliance Indiana
The Literacy Cooperative, OH
The NROC Project, TX
The Occupational Training Institute, Foothill-De Anza Community College District, CA
The Osborne Association, NY
The Right Way Foundation, CO
Tompkins Workforce New York, NY
Transportation Learning Center, MD
Turning the Corner, LLC, CO
Uinta B.O.C.E.S. #1, WY
Union Settlement Association, NY
United Way of Central Iowa, IA
United Way of Greater Cincinnati, OH
Valley Adult School-Lake Elsinore Unified School, CA
Vermont Adult Learning, VT
Virgin Islands Workforce Board, US Virgin Islands
Virginia Association for Adult and Continuing Education, VA
VocRehab Vermont, VT
Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, WA
Welcoming Center for New Pennsylvanians, PA
West Suburban Jobs Council, IL
Westchester Community College, NY
Wisconsin Literacy, Inc., WI

Workforce Development Board of Oswego County, NY
Workforce Development Board of South Central Wisconsin, WI
Workforce Development Board, Herkimer, Madison & Oneida Counties, Inc., NY
Workforce Solutions Group, MA
World Education, Inc., MA
Wyoming Machine, Inc., MN