



March 19, 2018

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chairman
House Labor, HHS, Education
Appropriations Subcommittee
2467 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
House Labor, HHS, Education
Appropriations Subcommittee
2413 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Cole and Ranking Member DeLauro:

The undersigned organizations make up the United States Workforce Association (USWA), a collaborative effort of local workforce boards, businesses, educational institutions, and organizations involved in workforce and economic development activities across the country. These organizations are directly involved in the implementation of the bipartisan Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014, specifically promoting the successful execution by local workforce boards of the law to serve businesses, employers, and job - and career-seekers. With national unemployment levels near all-time lows, the available labor market faces significant barriers to employment – lack of high school or post-secondary credential, ex-offender, long-term unemployed, housing, transportation, child care – and the list could continue. The federal workforce system, which is structured using the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), is poised to address these community needs but has not been funded to its authorized levels since it was passed by Congress in 2014.

As the House Appropriations Committee considers the Fiscal Year 2019 Labor-HHS Appropriations Bill, we urge you to support further federal investment into WIOA and fully fund the law to its authorized levels. Appropriated levels have fallen short of authorized levels specifically in Title I accounts at the Department of Labor (Adult Employment and Training Services, Youth Workforce Investment Activities, and Dislocated Worker Employment and Training Services). An expanded federal investment across WIOA programs leads to more job training, education, skills development and innovative, proven practices like industry-based sector partnerships, career pathways, and apprenticeships. Local workforce development boards are currently executing on these strategies working directly with employers to address their talent needs.

With sustained economic prosperity for America as a priority, this increased federal investment could not come at a more opportune time. The skills gap is real and workforce boards are on the front lines with various stakeholders including employers, community colleges, post-secondary institutions, high schools, non-profits and career and technical education programs, to address the problem.

With additional resources available for non-defense discretionary accounts through the passage of the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018, the Fiscal Year 2019 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill must fully fund all Titles I, II, III, and IV at the level authorized by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).

The funding levels we are requesting in the FY2019 Labor, HHS, Education Appropriations Bill are listed below:

Title I – Department of Labor

- \$881.303 million for Adult Employment and Training Services,
- \$943.828 million for Youth Workforce Investment Activities, and
- \$1.406 billion for Dislocated Worker Employment and Training Services

Title II – Department of Education

- \$664.552 million for Adult Education

Title III – Department of Labor

- \$691,231,000 for Wagner-Peyser (FY2017 Enacted)

Title IV – Department of Education

- \$3,302,053,000 for Vocational Rehabilitation Services

Fiscal Year 2019 Administration Budget Proposal Language

We also wanted to highlight concerning language contained in the FY2019 Department of Labor Budget Proposal that would give Governors more authority to re-designate and consolidate local workforce boards. The budget proposal language would waive protections given to local control by circumventing Section 106 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). Congress recognized that local economic conditions are best addressed at the local level when WIOA was passed in 2014. That local control is critical when dealing with employers and other stakeholders as we can address economic issues with flexible resources and innovative solutions. We oppose the language included in the budget and encourage you to further support local control within the federal workforce system.

This training, support and business partnership is vital to our country's economic prosperity. For further information, please contact Chris Andresen at (202) 851-3618.

Sincerely,



Bob Lanter
Executive Director
California Workforce Association



Luann Dunsford
Chief Executive Officer
Michigan Works! Association



John Trott
President
Ohio Workforce Association



Kelly Folks, President
Rocky Mountain Workforce
Development Association





Anne Kilzer
Director
Minnesota Workforce Council
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