



July 10, 2013

Dear Senate Appropriations Committee Member:

The Campaign to Invest in America's Workforce—a broad coalition of national organizations calling for greater and more effective federal investments in our nation's skills so more U.S. businesses can find the skilled workers they need to compete globally, and so all U.S. workers can share in and contribute to our country's economic prosperity—strongly supports the Senate Fiscal Year (FY) 2014 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies (Labor-H) Appropriations bill reported out by the Subcommittee on July 9th.

Key workforce programs have lost more than \$1 billion—more than 30 percent—in federal funding since just 2010. And these cuts are only made worse by the budget caps and sequester cuts put in place for the next decade as part of the Budget Control Act (BCA). As a result, education and training providers are being forced to reduce the education and training services they deliver, fewer workers are able to access those services, and fewer employers are able to access the skilled workers they need to grow their businesses.

Importantly, the Senate Labor-H bill replaces the incredibly damaging sequester, and instead adopts funding levels consistent with the levels established by the American Taxpayer Relief Act, adopted by the Senate on a bipartisan vote of 89-8, and the FY 2014 Senate budget resolution. The Senate Labor-H bill is in stark contrast to the House Labor-H allocation that is 18.6 percent below the final FY 2013 sequester level and 22.2 percent below the FY 13 pre-sequester Continuing Resolution level.

In particular, the bill makes a number of critical new investments in federal workforce development programs. The bill:

- Includes an additional \$86 million for Workforce Investment Act (WIA) formula grant to States to help, low-skilled adults, dislocated workers, and low-income youth obtain the skills and credentials they need to succeed in the workplace.
- Increases the statewide set-aside under WIA from 5 to 7.5 percent (it was previously 15 percent), which will help those states that are using the funds to support innovative strategies such as career pathways and sector partnership.
- Provides an additional \$30 million for Reemployment Services under the Wagner-Peyser Employment Services to help the nearly 12 million currently unemployed U.S. workers more rapidly reenter the labor market.

- Increases funding for the Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS) by \$37 million to help transitioning and disabled veterans reenter the civilian labor market.
- Provides \$22 million through the Career and Technical Education (CTE) National Programs and the GPRA Data/HEA Program Evaluation program for a new dual enrollment program to support career pathways for students, including adult basic education students, in career and technical education.
- Includes an additional \$3 million for Adult Education National Leadership Activities to support the expansion of the Department of Education's reentry education model demonstration initiative.
- Continues to provide support for low-income students enrolled in postsecondary education by increasing the maximum Pell grant to \$5,785 and increasing funding for the Federal Work Study program by \$50 million.

While we strongly applaud the work of the Committee and the many critical investments that are included in this bill, we are disappointed that the Committee was unable to include language from last year's Senate bill that reinstated the Ability to Benefit provision for students in Career Pathways programs. We urge Congress to find a way to reinstate this vital provision of the Higher Education Act, so these deserving students can again become eligible for Pell grant eligibility.

The need to invest in the skills of our nation's workforce has never been greater. Nearly 12 million U.S. workers remain unemployed today—more than 40 percent of whom have been unemployed for 26 weeks or more—yet employers continue to struggle to find workers with the skills they need to compete in the global economy.

The Campaign to Invest in America's Workforce urges you to support the Senate FY 2014 Labor-H Appropriations bill, which begins to restore some of the damaging cuts made to federal education and training programs in recent years and to invest in a skilled workforce.

Thank you for your consideration of this important issue.