



LEGISLATIVE ALERT

June 3, 2014

The Honorable Tom Harkin, Chairman
Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions
428 Senate Dirksen Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Lamar Alexander, Ranking Member
Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions
428 Senate Dirksen Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Harkin and Ranking Member Alexander:

On behalf of the AFL-CIO, I write in support of the “Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).” This legislation will improve our nation’s workforce development system and help countless Americans prepare for new jobs. Your work, with the help of Senators Murray and Isakson, brings to a successful conclusion an 11-year effort to reauthorize the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998.

Providing greater access to training, education and employment services remains a top priority of the AFL-CIO and its affiliates. We believe that to improve the nation’s workforce development system we must focus on providing sufficient skill training to participants, rather than directing individuals into low-wage, low skill jobs that have little prospect of career advancement. WIOA provides important new tools to take us in this direction.

WIOA strikes a delicate balance by maintaining the system’s core programs, while at the same time requiring them to meet a new set of common performance standards. Though the bill did not incorporate all the changes we recommended, important improvements were made in the Wagner-Peyser section of the bill, as well as in the Job Corps program. The bill also solidifies labor representation on the state and local workforce boards, and it includes a greater emphasis on career pathways, workplace-based career counseling, and sector partnerships.

The success of our nation’s employment and training system is a key factor in whether jobless workers can obtain gainful employment and high skill jobs. Enactment of the “Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act” will help us achieve these goals. We look forward to working with you to further improve our workforce development system in the future.

Sincerely,

William Samuel, Director
Government Affairs Department