



May 27, 2014

The Honorable Tom Harkin, Chair
Committee on Health, Education,
Labor and Pensions
United States Senate

The Honorable John Kline, Chair
Education and Workforce Committee
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Lamar Alexander
Ranking Member
Committee on Health, Education,
Labor and Pensions
United States Senate

The Honorable George Miller
Ranking Member
Education and Workforce Committee
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Patty Murray, Chair
Committee on Budget
United States Senate

The Honorable Virginia Foxx, Chair
Subcommittee on Higher Education and
Workforce Training
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Johnny Isakson
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Employment and
Workplace Safety
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Ruben Hinojosa
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Higher Education and
Workforce Training
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Senators Harkin, Alexander, Murray and Isakson and
Representatives Foxx, Kline, Miller and Hinojosa:

On behalf of the National Association of Counties (NACo) and the nation's 3,069 counties, I write in support of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, (H.R. 803 as amended), legislation that would amend and reauthorize the Workforce Investment Act of 1998. We thank you for all of your work and leadership on this very important issue and urge the House and Senate to pass the compromise legislation.

As you know, WIA is long overdue for reauthorization, as it expired in 2003. A strong and modernized workforce system will increase investments in quality services, resources and training, and help ensure that states and localities can continue to respond to the needs of unemployed and underemployed Americans. The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act provides the needed framework for a modernized workforce development system.

An essential component to WIA's success is maintaining local and regional governance, based on regional economies and local labor markets. Workforce and economic development must continue to occur at the local level, be governed at the local level and also coordinated with other programs. We

thank you for recognizing this in the compromise bill. We are pleased that the bill will enhance flexibility at the local level so that communities can better address their workforce challenges.

We are also pleased that the bill reduces the required numbers for the local workforce boards (from 51 to 19) and maintains a business majority, which will help to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of these boards. The bill also standardizes performance accountability with the creation of six core indicators for adults and youth, to determine workforce programs success, which is an improvement from the current system.

The legislation allows for up to 20 percent of local board funds to be used for incumbent worker and on the job training, which will allow flexibility to meet local needs. It also recognizes the importance of focusing on both in and out-of-school youth utilizing career pathways and education and training that lead to attainment of high school diploma, recognized postsecondary credentials and meaningful employment opportunities.

We urge House and Senate members to finalize passage of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act this congressional session. The legislation will ensure that America's workers can develop the skills needed for meaningful employment by having access to effective job training and placement services and that employers' have a skilled workforce to maintain and increase their competitive edge.

We stand ready to work with Congress to pass this important legislation.

Sincerely,



Linda Langston
Supervisor
Linn County, Iowa
President, National Association of Counties