



NATIONAL YOUTH EMPLOYMENT COALITION

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May 30, 2014

Senator Tom Harkin, Chair
Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions
131 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Patty Murray, Chair
U.S. Senate Budget Committee
624 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Lamar Alexander, Ranking Member
Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions
131 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Johnny Isakson, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Employment and Workforce Safety
131 Russell Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Harkin, Alexander, Murray and Isakson:

On behalf of the National Youth Employment Coalition (NYEC) and its national membership network, I am writing to express our support for the bipartisan sponsorship of the *Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act* (WIOA). In particular, WIOA recognizes that the needs of disadvantaged youth are different from adult populations, and therefore retains a separate funding stream to support employment, training, education and comprehensive services to prepare youth and young adults for success in the 21st century labor market.

Reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act offers an opportunity to address the challenges facing our emerging workforce, to make improvements to the workforce development system, and to intentionally connect youth with secondary and postsecondary education systems. The provisions in this bill represent strong action to streamline and improve workforce investment system programs, and to connect youth to multiple career pathways to success.

In addition, we commend you for including provisions within WIOA that simplify eligibility requirements for youth and also ensure that youth formula funding prioritizes support for youth and young adults most in need. Furthermore, we appreciate that the WIOA maintains and expands elements that support quality programming, expands the age limit for services for out-of-school youth to 24, and provides opportunities to recognize and measure progress over time.

At a time when far too many youth are unemployed and without secondary and postsecondary credentials, the need to strengthen and expand federal youth delivery systems that provide employment options, education and comprehensive supports has never been greater. WIOA demonstrates a bipartisan commitment to disadvantaged youth and the program integrity of youth-focused services.

Thank you for your leadership and efforts in support of youth workforce development and education programs. Please do not hesitate to contact me for assistance or questions at (202) 659-1064 or at mt@nyec.org.

Sincerely,

Mala B. Thakur
Executive Director
National Youth Employment Coalition

cc: US House of Representatives, Education and Workforce Committee