



The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Chair
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Leaders McConnell and Schumer, Chairman Cochran and Ranking Member Leahy:

The Campaign to Invest in America's Workforce (CIAW) is a coalition of diverse national organizations that offer direct services, advocacy, research, and policy development to help people of all ages and conditions develop their skills, enter gainful employment, and enroll and succeed in postsecondary education. CIAW urges you to pass a Fiscal Year (FY) 2018 Appropriations bill that includes adequate investments in job training and adult education as you work to complete the appropriations process. We also encourage you to work with leadership to negotiate a long-term budget agreement that would include higher spending levels, end sequestration and raise harmful budget caps.

Middle skill jobs—those requiring more than a high school diploma, but not a four-year degree—make up 53 percent of today's labor market, but only 43 percent of U.S. workers are trained at this level. This disconnect leaves rural and urban businesses struggling to find workers with appropriate skills, and it leaves workers without meaningful pathways to better-paying jobs.

Despite the growing demands for skills, the President proposed draconian cuts to vital workforce and education programs. The U.S. House Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies (Labor-HHS) bill would still cut hundreds of millions of dollars from funding for the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), Pell Grants for low-income and working students, apprenticeship strategies, the Senior Community Service Employment Program, and other key investments in our economic competitiveness. The Senate Labor-HHS bill funding levels are higher than the House levels and more closely aligned to FY 2017 levels. These programs, however, have already been subject to historic disinvestments: since 2001 WIOA state training grants have been cut by 39%, CTE grants to states have been cut by 34%, and Adult Education funding has been cut by 22% when adjusted for inflation.

We simply cannot compete in the global economy if we keep cutting and eliminating effective programs. Ongoing state and local implementation of WIOA, as well as the upcoming reauthorizations of the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act and the Higher Education Act, provide unprecedented opportunities to develop the skills of America's workers through access to effective workforce education and training. Realizing this potential, however, requires sustained funding.



CIAW also urges you to maintain parity between defense and non-defense spending levels and provide adequate funding in an FY 2018 spending bill for critical programs under WIOA, the Perkins Act, the Higher Education Act, Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program, Title V under the Older Americans Act (OAA), the Corporation for National and Community Service's programs like AmeriCorps, and related activities.

Specifically, CIAW urges the committee to reject cuts to education and workforce programs and instead pass an appropriations bill that will restore investments in our nation's workers by:

- Funding WIOA Title I employment and training programs at authorized levels so states, local areas, and other partners can fully realize the bipartisan vision outlined by WIOA;
- Funding adult education and literacy programs under Title II of WIOA at least at authorized levels to ensure that the 36 million Americans with low basic skills can take advantage of existing and emerging economic opportunities;
- Funding Wagner-Peyser Employment Services (ES) activities under Title III of WIOA at current-year levels to give states the additional resources they need to provide WIOA's intensive reemployment services;
- Funding the vocational rehabilitation program and other employment services authorized under WIOA Title IV for adults and students with disabilities;
- Funding job training and employment services for older workers (Senior Community Service Employment Program) at no less than current year levels and maintaining the proposed funding increase for employment services for at-risk veterans (Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program);
- Maintaining or increasing the \$95 million investment in apprenticeship programs in current-year funding;
- Maintaining support for data collection on program effectiveness by funding the Workforce Data Quality Initiative at current year levels;
- Funding Perkins CTE state grants at least at \$1.3 billion to support CTE programs aligned to needs of business and industry; and
- Sustaining funding - including preserving the current reserve fund - for the federal Pell Grant program to ensure that the more than 7 million low-income students receiving this critical financial assistance can continue to pursue their education.

If you have questions about this letter or its attachments, please contact Kermit Kaleba, at Kermitk@nationalskillscoalition.org. Thank you for your attention to these important issues.

Sincerely,



Advance CTE

American Association of Community Colleges

American Association of Community College Trustees

Association for Career and Technical Education

Association of Farmworker Opportunity Programs

Augustus F. Hawkins Foundation

California Workforce Association

Center for Law and Social Policy

Coalition on Adult Basic Education (COABE)

Corporation for a Skilled Workforce

Council for Adult and Experiential Learning

Easterseals

Goodwill Industries International, Inc.

Heartland Alliance

Jobs for the Future

Maryland Workforce Association

Michigan Works! Association

Minnesota Workforce Council Association

National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity (NAPE)

National Association of Development Organizations

National Association of Regional Councils

National Association of Workforce Boards

National Association of Workforce Development Professionals

National College Transition Network, World Education, Inc.

National Council of State Directors of Adult Education

National League of Cities

National Skills Coalition

National Youth Employment Coalition

New York Association of Training and Employment Professionals

North Carolina Association of Workforce Development Boards

Northwest Wisconsin Workforce Investment Board

Oregon Workforce Partnership

Pennsylvania Workforce Development Association

ProLiteracy

Rocky Mountain Workforce Development Association

Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law

Texas Association of Workforce Boards

The Corps Network

The National Council for Workforce Education



United Way Worldwide
Workforce Data Quality Campaign
Young Invincibles
YouthBuild USA