



November 12, 2015

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

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski
Vice Chairwoman
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Harold Rogers
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairs and Ranking Members,

The Coalition to Invest in America's Workforce – a diverse coalition of national organizations whose members are helping people of all ages and conditions raise their skills, gain employment, and advance with U.S. businesses that need skilled workers to compete in today's rapidly restructuring economy – applauds your work in passing the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015 (BBA).

As you work to finalize allocations to annual appropriations bills under the revised budget caps, we urge you to ensure that the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies appropriations bill includes sufficient funding to support key workforce and education programs at FY 2016 authorized levels. Severe cuts to vital education and workforce programs over the past few years have hurt our nation's workers and businesses and restoration of funding is necessary to sustain our economic competitiveness. Without meaningful investments in a skilled workforce, skill gaps will stifle job growth and slow our nation's economic recovery.

Labor-HHS allocations must provide sufficient resources to achieve the following:

- Fund WIOA Title I employment and training programs at statutorily authorized levels so states, local areas and other partners in the public workforce system can fully realize the bipartisan vision outlined by WIOA
- Fund 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 are able to strengthen their educational levels in order to take advantage of emerging economic opportunities.

- Fund Wagner/Peyser Employment Services (ES) activities under Title III of WIOA at no less than \$1.064 billion, which includes the current base level of \$664 million and a new \$400 million supplemental appropriation – as included in President Obama’s budget -- to give states the additional resources they need to provide WIOA’s intensive reemployment services.
- Fully fund the vocational rehabilitation program and other employment services authorized under WIOA Title IV for adults and students with disabilities.
- Fund WIOA youth programs to train the next generation of workers so they can become productive citizens, achieve their career goals, and contribute to their local community.
- Fund job training and employment services for older workers and veterans authorized through the Older Americans Act and other laws at no less than level funding.
- Restore funding for the Perkins basic state grant program to pre-sequester levels to support our nation’s high schools, technical centers and community colleges in developing the highly skilled workforce demanded by employers.

Building on the bipartisan agreement in the BBA, Labor-HHS investments in America’s workers’ skills and education are critical to businesses, workers, and the economy. Again, **we urge you to fund key workforce and education programs at FY 2016 authorized levels.**

If you have questions about this letter, please contact Seth Turner, co-convener, Campaign to Invest in America’s Workforce (seth.turner@goodwill.org or 240-333-5508). Thank you for your leadership and attention to these important matters.