

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 19, 2018

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chairman
Labor-HHS-Education Subcommittee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
Labor-HHS-Education Subcommittee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Cole and Ranking Member DeLauro:

We write to request your continued support for federal workforce programs authorized by the bipartisan Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). As you consider the Fiscal Year (FY) 2019 Appropriations Act, we respectfully request that you provide substantial investments in job training programs in the final bill. As the Appropriations Committee continues their hard work to draft an FY 2019 budget while completing the FY 2018 budget, our constituents and agencies are faced with great uncertainty. During this challenging budgeting process, the importance of investing in our workforce must not be forgotten.

FY 2019 reflects a critical point in our nation's workforce investment strategy, with states and localities still implementing the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and adapting to the final regulations. Adequate funding is key for this potential to be realized – making the outcome of this year's budget and appropriations process critically important.

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. That leaves businesses struggling to find workers with appropriate skills, and it leaves workers without meaningful pathways to better-paying jobs. Industry or sector partnerships help address the skills gap by bringing together employers, education organizations, training, labor, and community-based organizations to develop work-based learning programs. Workforce funding is key to making sure job training programs have the capacity to meet U.S. employer needs.

Maintaining funding for WIOA implementation is necessary for states to fully carry out congressional reforms. Doing so will improve our nation's economic competitiveness and put in place comprehensive workforce strategies that support national priorities, such as rebuilding our infrastructure. With meaningful investments, programs across the nation will help workers gain the skills to support themselves and their families and ensure employers will have access to the skilled workers they need to compete in the global economy.

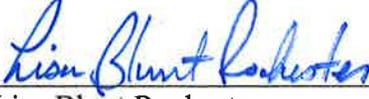
Specifically, we respectfully request that you:

- Fund WIOA Title I formula and national employment and training programs at the authorized levels so states, localities, and other partners can fully realize the bipartisan vision outlined by WIOA;
- Support adult education and literacy programs under WIOA Title II at the authorized levels so Americans are able to take advantage of emerging economic opportunities;
- Provide no less than \$680 million to Wagner/Peyser Employment Services activities under Title III of WIOA to give states necessary, additional resources to operate WIOA's intensive reemployment services;
- Fund vocational rehabilitation program and other employment services at levels authorized under WIOA Title IV for adults and students with disabilities;
- Reinvest current levels in the Workforce Data Quality Initiative Grants to enable states to provide useful information about skills, employment, and earning outcomes to help businesses fill skilled positions;
- Expand apprenticeships by increasing Congressional investment to \$200 million for FY 2019; and
- Provide \$1.9 million for the Women in Apprenticeship and Nontraditional Occupations program to help employers and labor unions recruit, train, and retain women for nontraditional employment opportunities.

Thank you for your attention to these critical issues. We look forward to working with you as we invest in the U.S. workforce to meet the needs of America's workers and employers today and into the future.

Sincerely,


 Suzanne Bonamici
 Member of Congress


 Lisa Blunt Rochester
 Member of Congress


 Robert C. "Bobby" Scott
 Member of Congress


 Raúl M. Grijalva
 Member of Congress

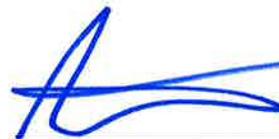

 Joe Courtney
 Member of Congress

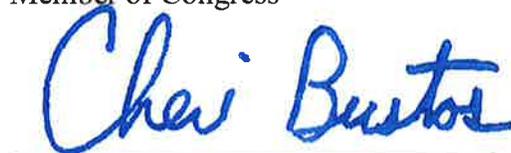

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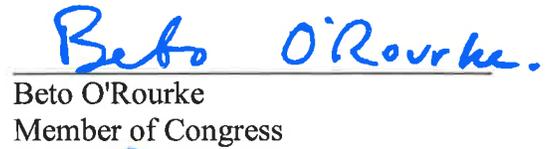
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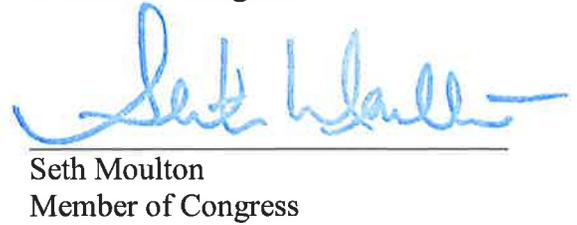
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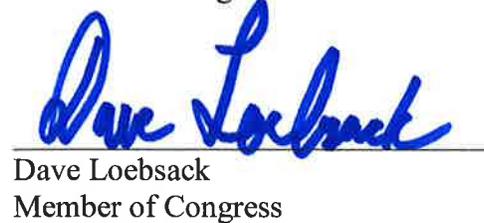
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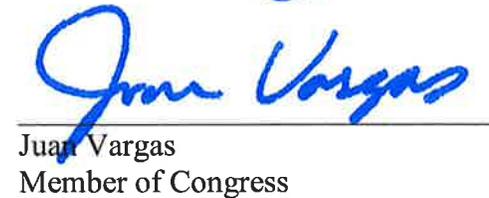
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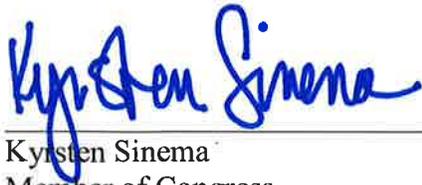
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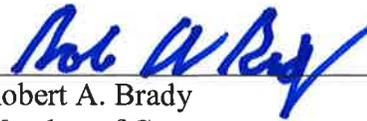
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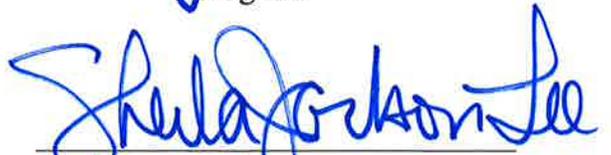
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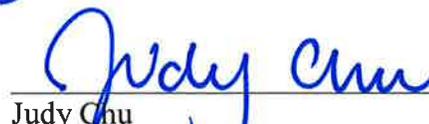
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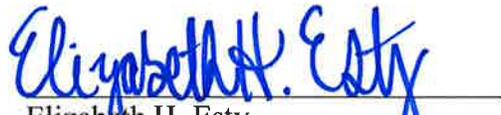
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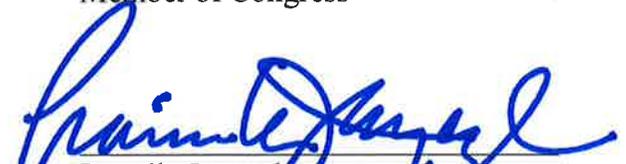

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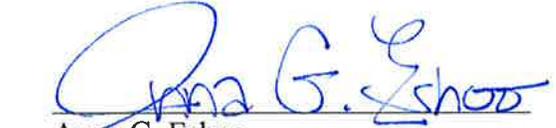

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