

**Congress of the United States**  
Washington, DC 20515

March 21, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker of the House  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
House Minority Leader  
U.S House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Minority Leader McCarthy,

As communities across the country respond to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, we must continue to make meaningful federal investments to support the workers most affected. Sectors across our economy, from healthcare to manufacturing, are already facing severe workforce shortages. We are experiencing a significant economic crisis, and our response must continue to parallel a significant scale of federal investments. Our workforce development system is tasked with making sure that all workers, particularly those with barriers to employment, have the skills they need for meaningful employment. Strengthening investments in reemployment and layoff aversion strategies, as well as upskilling and reskilling opportunities and employment services for displaced and dislocated workers, would provide considerable economic relief to those on the frontlines of our current national emergency.

Congress has recognized the benefits of investing in our workforce system in previous times of economic turmoil. The American Reinvestment and Recovery Act nearly doubled federal funding for workforce development. Importantly, in 2014 Congress demonstrated bipartisan support to address the challenges in our labor market through job training programs by passing the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity (WIOA) Act. WIOA outlines a clear vision for addressing the challenges of workers dislocated or displaced by COVID-19, but it needs robust investments. Since 2001, investments in state grants under WIOA have declined by almost 40 percent. We need to rapidly scale up federal funding for WIOA to recognize the needs of workers in this pandemic.

Specifically, we request that you:

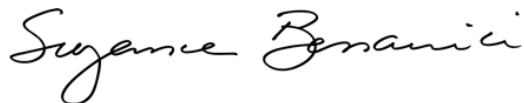
- Provide \$500,000,000 for National Dislocated Worker Grants as we respond to COVID—19. These funds could be used to support workers in industries like hospitality, transportation, manufacturing, and retail that are facing massive layoffs. The National Dislocated Worker Grants could be used to support training and temporary employment for immediate needs in our response to COVID-19, such as supporting the needs of health care workers, delivering medicine, food, and other supplies to vulnerable populations, or organizing and coordinating recovery efforts.
- Invest \$2,000,000,000 in the State Dislocated Worker Grants to scale up rapid response activities identified by states and localities on the frontlines of responding to the COVID-

19 national emergency, to support layoff aversion and provide necessary support to unemployed individuals and to employers facing layoffs.

- Support \$1,500,000,000 for WIOA Title I-B Youth Workforce Investment Activities to prioritize summer and year-round employment for youth, especially for youth age 21 and under, who may be disproportionately affected by diminished labor market opportunities as a result of the economic consequences of the COVID-19 national emergency.
- Allocate \$1,000,000,000 for WIOA Title II adult education and training activities to provide necessary support to workers underemployed or most at-risk of unemployment, and coordinate with employers facing economic hardship or employment challenges because of the COVID-19 national emergency. This funding will help support layoff aversion strategies, like on-the-job training and work-based learning opportunities for digital literacy and other skills to help workers prepare for the skills needed by in-demand industries.
- Expand investments in Employment Services to \$50,000,000 to provide reemployment services for unemployed and underemployed workers employers, including those receiving unemployment insurance as a result of the COVID-19 national emergency, providing for services such as reemployment services, job search assistance, job matching services based on experience of workers, and helping employers dealing with layoffs.

Investing in workforce programs – and the support services necessary for workers to succeed in them – will help strengthen our economic recovery. With meaningful investments, programs across the nation will help workers gain the skills to support themselves and their families and make sure employers will have access to the skilled workers they need to compete. Thank you for your attention to these critical issues. We look forward to continuing to work with you to make investments that benefit workers a top priority.

Sincerely,



Suzanne Bonamici  
Member of Congress



Andy Levin  
Member of Congress

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