

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 10, 2011

The Honorable Tom Harkin
Chairman
Appropriations Subcommittee on
Labor, Health and Human Services,
and Education
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Ranking Member
Appropriations Subcommittee on
Labor, Health and Human Services,
and Education
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Harkin and Ranking Member Shelby:

While we recognize the challenges presented by our current fiscal environment, we urge you to restore funding for the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), Employment Services, and the Perkins Career and Technical Education programs to FY10 levels in the FY 2012 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies Appropriations bill.

These critical programs help ensure that jobseekers and employers can access the skills they need to rebuild our nation's economy and provide for our future competitiveness. In 2009, more than 8 million adults and youth received training and related services through the publicly-funded workforce investment programs, a 234-percent increase in participation between 2007 and 2009. The individuals assisted by these programs include dislocated workers who have lost their jobs through no fault of their own, returning veterans, low-skilled adults lacking the basic skills necessary to compete in the 21st-Century economy, and young adults struggling to enter the labor market for the first time. Millions more participated in career and technical education, adult education, and other workforce programs that will put them on the path to well-paying jobs and careers.

However, despite strong and rising demand for federally-funded workforce development services, the FY 2011 Continuing Appropriations Act cut more than \$1 billion from these programs, including \$300 million in cuts to state formula grants under Title I of the Workforce Investment Act, nearly \$140 million in cuts to Career and Technical Education state grants, and more than \$30 million in cuts for adult education programs.

In light of our tenuous economic recovery, additional cuts to these important programs would undermine workforce preparedness and long-term economic growth. Cutting funding to these programs would significantly limit our nation's ability to support and train individuals to reengage in the workforce, impact employers' abilities to find highly-skilled workers, and undermine our economic competitiveness. Rather, we should focus efforts on improving the workforce system through reauthorization of key programs such as the Workforce Investment Act, ensuring that workforce programs are updated to meet local and regional labor market demands.

Thank you for considering this important request.

Sincerely,



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senate



Susan M. Collins
United States Senate

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

Jay Byrnes

Olympic Swine

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