



**NATIONAL SKILLS COALITION**  
Every worker. Every industry. A strong economy.

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## House Republicans Call to Eliminate Federal Worker Retraining Amidst 9 Percent Unemployment

White House Remains Silent on House Proposal to Eliminate Program as of July 1

WASHINGTON, D.C. – A national coalition of employers, labor management partnerships, educators, and public officials is calling on the President to respond to a proposal released by House Appropriators last week to eliminate the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), the nation's primary job training program, as of July 1.

The proposed cuts are part of the House continuing resolution which is funding most government operations for 2011 and is set to expire on March 4.

Eight million Americans participated in WIA funded training programs in 2009, a 130 percent increase since 2007. If the continuing resolution passes, the Workforce Investment Act would cease to exist on July 1.

The President highlighted the importance of WIA in putting Americans back to work during his State of the Union Address earlier this month. The President applauded Kathy Proctor – a laid-off North Carolina textile worker – for her successful efforts to retrain at her local community college for a job in the state's growing biotechnology industry. The WIA Dislocated Worker program paid for Ms. Proctor's training.

The President's budget released on Monday includes an 8 percent cut to Workforce Investment Act state grants in 2012. But the White House has offered no response to the House proposal to completely eliminate the program as of July 2011.

"In light of the House proposal to eliminate WIA in July, the President's proposal to cut the program by 8 percent starting in October looks comparatively better," said Andy Van Kleunen, Executive Director of National Skills Coalition. "But it is somewhat beside the point if the White House doesn't respond to the House proposal to permanently end the program as of July."

The House proposal comes at a time when despite record unemployment, employers in growing high-tech and growing industries report difficulty finding workers with the technical skills needed to fill jobs.

"The President laid out a vision in his State of the Union address for educating the next generation of innovators to win the future. He has laid out an education spending plan that could help achieve that," said Van Kleunen. "But if we eliminate the federal program that will train the technicians and middle-skill workers who will implement those innovations, those jobs won't stay in the U.S. They will go abroad to nations that are investing in workforce training in significant ways."

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*National Skills Coalition is a broad-based coalition of employers, unions, education and training providers, and public officials working toward a vision of an America that grows its economy by investing in its people so that every worker and every industry has the skills to compete and prosper.*