



NATIONAL SKILLS COALITION

Every worker. Every industry. A strong economy.

January 30, 2014



On Tuesday night, I watched President Obama sketch out an “[Opportunity for All](#)” agenda that included a new government-wide initiative, led by Vice President Biden, to re-tool our nation’s workforce education and training programs so they are more responsive to the needs of local industry, and more effective in helping local folks gain access to skilled jobs with good wages.

That was fun to watch. Not only was it encouraging [to hear this call from the President](#), but it also confirmed that the workforce partnership models developed by our members and affiliates are finally being recognized as potential drivers of a new approach to human capital investment in this country.

That’s why, tomorrow, I’ll be joining over 30 NSC members and allies—including directors of nationally recognized sector partnerships, as well as a contingent of local employers from [Business Leaders United for Workforce Partnerships](#) (BLU)—at a White House event with President Obama to discuss what can be done to help our nation’s 4 million long-term unemployed. The President wants to enlist these sector partnerships and business leaders in this campaign, along with our nation’s workforce boards, community colleges, labor unions, and community-based organizations: that is, the very stakeholders who make up our coalition.

You can watch the proceedings tomorrow, starting at 11:30 AM, on the White House’s website at [whitehouse.gov/live](#). While most of you couldn’t be there in person, be assured your work will be present in the ideas offered to the President. NSC staff who have been working with the White House on the event will provide a full report on the proceedings tomorrow.

The End of a Big Week for Skills

On Tuesday, like most people, I watched the State of the Union on TV. But we had friends literally “in the House” that night to witness the President’s address in person. They included two employer-leaders of Business Leaders United who attended the speech as guests of their members of Congress.

 Speaker John Boehner [@SpeakerBoehner](#)
#SOTU guests: Scott Ellsworth of Tipco Punch Co. in Hamilton, #OH. Scott is active w/ job training programs
02:04 PM - 28 Jan 14

 Al Franken [@alfranken](#)
Very excited to have #MN manufacturer & workforce development leader Erick Ajax as my guest for #SOTU -Al bit.ly/1faer3u
08:31 PM - 28 Jan 14

[Scott Ellsworth, the Vice-President of Tipco Punch](#) in Hamilton, OH, and a member of Cincinnati’s Partnership for a Competitive Workforce (an affiliate of the National Fund for Workforce Solutions) was the guest of Speaker John Boehner (R-OH); and [Erick Ajax, Vice President of E.J. Ajax and Sons](#) in Minneapolis was the guest of Senator Al Franken (D-MN). Both of these business leaders have spent the past year educating members of Congress about the sector partnerships they help lead, and about the merits of such proposals as the [SECTORS Act](#) and the [Community College to Career Act](#). Both proposals call for a new role for sector partnerships in targeting federal training investments, in line with the call President Obama made in the House chamber Tuesday night.

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On Wednesday, Vice President Joe Biden traveled to Rochester, NY, for an event about job-driven training at Monroe Community College. [Mike Mandina, President of Optimax](#) and another founding member of Business Leaders United, [introduced the Vice President](#). Mike is one of the employer-leaders of the Finger Lakes Manufacturing Enterprise (FAME), a sector partnership that has been working with the local workforce investment board, three community colleges, and several area high schools to prepare local residents for high-paying but unfilled jobs in photonics and other local manufacturing. The Vice President noted that FAME is the type of partnership model he wants to look at as part of his cross-agency reform effort.



And today, [President Obama traveled to Waukesha, WI](#) to tour the General Electric plant and to talk about the firm's job training efforts, which are supported by the state workforce board's sector partnership program. The leaders of a number of other sector partnership programs will be participating, including NSC Leadership Council member Earl Buford, the director of the Wisconsin Regional Training Partnership, which [will also be featured at the event](#). The President will also be discussing the [just released goals of the inter-agency initiative on workforce programs](#), including a re-focusing of the last round of TAA Community College grants. NSC staff will provide an analysis in the days ahead.

But Wait... There's More!

Next week, Secretary of Labor Tom Perez will convene a meeting of national organizations participating in the [Campaign to Invest in America's Workforce](#), including National Skills Coalition, to drill down into this discussion about building on the successes of our workforce system.

A few days later, Office of Vocational and Adult Education Assistant Secretary Brenda Dann-Messier will meet with NSC's Leadership Council to discuss some specific reforms for our nation's adult education and immigration integration policies, as a follow-up to the alarming findings about U.S. basic skills in the recent [Program for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies](#) (PIAAC).

And we are just over a week away from NSC's Skills Summit, in which cross-stakeholder delegations from over 25 states will be coming to Washington to meet with members of Congress about a range of workforce development, adult education and higher education issues.

Stay Tuned!

Your issues are on the move here in Washington, as is your coalition! We'll keep you up to date on all these developments in the weeks ahead.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andy".

Andy Van Kleunen
Executive Director

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