

June 23, 2014

United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) and the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT), which represent the nation's more than 1,100 community college presidents and their trustees, we write in support the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), which may come to the Senate floor this week. We urge you to vote for H.R. 803, as amended by the Murray-Isakson-Harkin-Alexander substitute amendment.

Workforce development is at the core of our members' mission, and as such reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act has long been a priority for our associations. Community colleges play a leading role in providing workers with the skills they need in the 21st century economy at all stages in their careers and educational development. We are hopeful that the improvements made to the workforce development system in WIOA will enhance the partnership between our colleges and the workforce system, and that this reauthorization will provide the impetus towards improved funding for these vital programs.

We are pleased to see many elements of this bill align with our priorities for reauthorization. Community colleges strongly support the steps that have been taken in this legislation to align the various components of the workforce system and refocus their efforts on the attainment of postsecondary credentials. AACC and ACCT support the inclusion of common performance indicators across programs, as well as greater emphasis on the transition to postsecondary education in the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act.

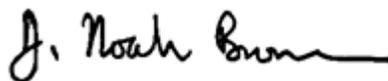
Additionally, we support provisions in the bill that call for integrated delivery of basic skills and occupational instruction. AACC and ACCT continue to support these career pathway models, as well as the bill's emphasis on sector partnerships. We are also pleased that the bill formally eliminates the sequence of services in favor of an integrated career services category. Since FY 2010, funding for workforce and adult education programs under WIA has declined significantly. While the authorization levels under WIOA uphold some of these reductions in the near-term, it also provides for a much needed yearly increase in authorization levels.

H.R. 803, as amended, is a bicameral, bipartisan bill that will better align the federal workforce system and ultimately better serve workers seeking new or improved employment opportunities. We are concerned that substantive changes to the bill at this juncture may upset that balance. In particular, the amendment to be offered by Sen. Flake, which would require governors to take disruptive actions after a local area failed performance metrics in any one year, should be rejected. The underlying bill contains a reasonable, carefully crafted process to first provide assistance to under-performing local areas, followed by sanctions and reorganization should those failures persist.

Thank you for considering our views on this matter and your vote in favor of H.R. 803.



Walter G. Bumphus
AACC President and CEO



J. Noah Brown
ACCT President and CEO