

United Way Worldwide

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June 24, 2014

The Honorable Tom Harkin
Chairman
Committee on Health, Education, Labor &
Pensions
United States Senate

The Honorable Lamar Alexander
Ranking Member
Committee on Health, Education, Labor &
Pensions
United States Senate

The Honorable Patty Murray
Member
Subcommittee on Employment &
Workplace Safety
United States Senate

The Honorable Johnny Isakson
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Employment &
Workplace Safety
United States Senate

The Honorable John Kline
Chairman
Committee on Education & the Workforce
United States House of Representatives

The Honorable George Miller
Ranking Member
Committee on Education & the Workforce
United States House of Representatives

The Honorable Virginia Foxx
Chairwoman
Subcommittee on Higher Education &
Workforce Training
United States House of Representatives

The Honorable Ruben Hinojosa
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Higher Education &
Workforce Training
United States House of Representatives

Dear Chairman Harkin, Ranking Member Alexander, Senator Murray, Ranking Member Isakson, Chairman Kline, Ranking Member Miller, Chairwoman Foxx, and Ranking Member Hinojosa:

On behalf of United Way Worldwide's network of 1,200 United Ways across America, I write to thank you for your bipartisan leadership in developing the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). This legislation is a step in the right direction in modernizing our workforce system to meet the demands of the 21st century. In better aligning and integrating workforce programs, utilizing common measures of success, prioritizing youth, and promoting promising practices such as career pathways and sector partnerships, the WIOA represents a win for families, communities, and the nation at-large.

United Way is committed to advancing the building blocks of individual and collective opportunity – education, financial stability and health. Family-sustaining employment is the foundation of financial stability. Families must have a steady source of income that covers the

cost of basic necessities before they can make long-term financial decisions regarding savings and asset building. Communities equipped with a well-trained workforce are economically vibrant and businesses can flourish.

Much has changed in our global economy since the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) first passed in 1998. With 9.8 million individuals currently seeking jobs, prioritizing the reauthorization of WIA is essential to ensuring workers are equipped with skills that lead to family-sustaining employment, and that U.S. employers and industries have the trained workforce they need to compete in the global economy.

While we cannot endorse all aspects of the bill, we understand that WIOA is the product of bicameral, bipartisan compromise. We believe WIOA represents opportunity for youth, families, businesses, and communities. United Way appreciates the emphasis on best practices such as career pathways and sector partnerships, the common performance measures, and the opportunities for alignment to promote seamless delivery of service. Additionally, WIOA's youth provisions, with increased emphasis on lower-income and out-of-school youth, will prove instrumental in positively influencing the trajectory of our future workforce. To further enable innovation and replicate proven practices, restoring the Workforce Innovation Fund and creating a sector-based partnership grant program akin to that described in The SECTORS Act of 2013, would make WIOA even stronger.

United Way Worldwide supports enactment of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and thanks you for your bipartisan leadership advancing the common good through this critical legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Steve Taylor', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Steve Taylor
Senior Vice President and Counsel for Policy
United Way Worldwide