



June 20, 2014

The Honorable Tom Harkin
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Lamar Alexander
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Johnny Isakson
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senators Harkin, Alexander, Isakson, and Murray:

On behalf of the U.S. Conference of Mayors (USCM), the National Association of Counties (NACo), the National League of Cities (NLC), the National Association of Workforce Boards (NAWB), the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO), and the National Association of Regional Councils (NARC) and our respective national memberships of local government officials, business leaders, workforce investment boards, and regional and development organization leaders, we are writing to express our strong support for the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA, H.R. 803, as amended) and our strong opposition to an amendment offered by Senator Flake that would create uncertainty in the nation's workforce development system for states and localities by potentially requiring Governors to reorganize workforce development boards based on only a single year's performance. We urge every Senator to vote against this amendment when H.R. 803, as amended, is brought to the floor as early as this week.

There is consensus that the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) is long overdue for reauthorization. To be competitive in a 21st Century economy, our country needs a robust workforce system supported by an increase in investment in quality services, resources and training. The WIOA, as drafted, would achieve these goals through much needed modernization and streamlining of the nation's current workforce system, helping those Americans who are out of work receive the training they need and the support they require to obtain employment.

The Flake amendment to H.R. 803, as amended, would only create uncertainty in the nation's workforce development system for states and localities and the individuals who rely upon it. Whereas, WIOA provides the flexibility to local workforce development areas to adapt and meet new performance requirements before being subject to reorganization; the Flake amendment dramatically reduces that flexibility by mandating reorganization after only one year.

As with any service delivery system, local workforce development areas need sufficient time to identify performance issues and to develop corrective measures to address those issues. The Flake amendment would subject workforce areas to yearly threats of reorganization without consideration of other factors. This would result in focusing state and local efforts on governance matters rather than on delivering needed workforce development services. Such a scenario could result in constant upheaval within the workforce development system for system administrators and those they aim to serve without resulting in better outcomes.

As drafted, WIOA is a carefully crafted compromise that properly balances federal, state, and local interests, that is designed to move our nation's workforce system into the 21st Century, and that each of our organizations is proud to support. Because the Flake amendment would undermine that balance and create a system of uncertainty without enhancing services, we urge every Senator to oppose it and to vote for WIOA as written (H.R. 803, as amended.)

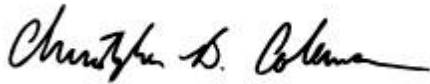
Sincerely yours,



Kevin Johnson
Mayor of Sacramento, CA
President, The United States Conference of
Mayors (USCM)



Linda Langston
Supervisor, Linn County, IA
President, National Association of Counties
(NACo)



Christopher Coleman
Mayor of St. Paul, MN
President, National League of Cities (NLC)



Ron Painter
President and CEO, National Association of
Workforce Boards (NAWB)



Byron Ryder
Judge, Leon County, Texas
Brazos Valley Council of Governments
President-elect, National Association of
Regional Councils (NARC)



Peter G. Gregory
Executive Director, Two Rivers-Ottawquechee
Regional Commission, Woodstock, VT
President, National Association of Development
Organizations (NADO)