July 14, 2022

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
United States House of Representatives
1236 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Republican Leader
United States Senate
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Republican Leader
United States House of Representatives
2468 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Leader Schumer, Speaker Pelosi, Leader McConnell, and Leader McCarthy,

Over the last two years our nation has faced immense hardship in response to a global pandemic and we are thankful to you for the leadership you have provided in the face of these challenges. As our nation continues to recover, there is a growing skills mismatch between workers and the jobs that are available. Previous legislative packages were woefully inadequate in addressing the need for workforce funding and this issue will become more acute as jobs are created, workers retire, technology shifts, and infrastructure projects spurred by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law begin. As Congress continues to negotiate a reconciliation package, the undersigned organizations urge you to incorporate dedicated funding for programs inclusive of those serving youth and adults authorized under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), including Wagner-Peyser and Adult Education; and the Perkins Career and Technical Education Act to address these economic challenges and shifts.

Even before the pandemic, businesses were sounding the alarm that there was an insufficient pipeline of workers to fill existing and future jobs. Now, with the national unemployment rate at 3.6%, lower than what many economists consider “full employment,” employers are facing a crisis with more than 11 million job openings. But the unemployment rate does not tell the whole story, as women, people of color, and individuals without a high school diploma continue to face an uneven recovery with significantly higher rates of unemployment compared to the national average. Many of these individuals were displaced from existing jobs during the pandemic in sectors that were hardest hit and the slowest to recover. These workers require training and support services to transition to new careers and access the jobs for which employers are currently hiring. All of this comes at a time when existing workforce investments are already insufficient. After decades of disinvestment in our workforce system, with cuts of over 40% since 2000 when inflation is factored, many workers, students, and businesses are simply left behind.

Implementation of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) and clean energy proposals will exacerbate our nation’s skills mismatch further. While the BIL importantly provides billions of dollars to maintain, repair, and build new infrastructure assets and is estimated to create as many as 2 million new jobs, the legislation did not provide sufficient direct funding to ensure that those jobs could be filled. As Congress
looks to include clean energy provisions in the upcoming reconciliation bill, it is likely that these proposals will also drive significant job creation. Congress should use the legislation as a vehicle to provide funding to support training, education, and supportive services.

Congress has the opportunity to use the reconciliation package to help existing and future displaced workers access good jobs, address inequities, support the workforce needs of businesses and ensure that our nation’s infrastructure and clean energy goals are met, but only if significant investments in workforce are included. We urge Congress to include funding for workforce in the upcoming reconciliation package.

Advance CTE
Alabama Cooperative Extension System/Alabama A&M and Auburn University
Alleghany County Employment & Training
Andromeda Community Inc
Association for Career and Technical Education
Association of Community College Trustees
Association of Farmworker Opportunity Programs
Baltimore County Department of Economic and Workforce Development
Bay Consortium Workforce Development Board
Business Leaders United for Workforce Partnerships
C & D Assembly, Incorporated
Capital Region Workforce Development Board
Career Path Services
Career Team
Careersourcecapitalregion.com
Cayuga Cortland Workforce Development Board
Center for Employment Opportunities
Central Six Development Council, Inc.
Central States SER
Coalition on Adult Basic Education (COABE)
CobbWorks, Inc.
Cochise Private Industry Council
Columbia-Greene Workforce Investment Office
Community Services Employment Training (CSET)
Continuing Education Association of New York
Corporation for a Skilled Workforce (CSW)
Cortland County Planning Department
Covenant Collaborative Consulting and Training LLC
Covenant House Missouri
Dutchess County Workforce Development Board
East Cascades Works
East Side House Settlement
EmployIndy
Every Strength Counts
Fifth Avenue Committee
FIRE a Partner of the Capital Region Workforce Development
First Planning District Workforce Development Board
FLWIB
Geaux Jobs - LWDA 20
Georgia Congress of Parents and Teachers Association
Georgia Power
Goodwill Industries International, Inc.
Henry Street Settlement
Highland County Community Action
Indiana Construction Roundtable Foundation
International Development Institute
Jefferson-Lewis WDB
Job Opportunities Task Force (JOTF)
JVS / RESCARE
Kansas Works
Kings Against Violence Initiative
KMW & Associates
KRA Corporation
Lane Workforce Partnership
Lehman College CUNY
LifeCrafters, LLC
Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC)
Lowcountry Council of Governments
Lower Savannah Council of Governments
Macomb/St. Clair Michigan Works!
Mass Workforce Association
McHenry County Workforce Network
Michigan Works! Association
Midlands Workforce Development Board
Missouri Work Assistance
Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce
National Able Network
National Association of Regional Councils
National Association of Workforce Boards
National Association of Workforce Development Professionals (NAWDP)
National Council for Workforce Education
National Skills Coalition
National Youth Employment Coalition
Northern Indiana Workforce Board, Inc.
Northwest Georgia Regional Commission
NYATEP
OIC of America
Orleans County Job Development Agency
Oswego County Workforce New York
Partnership for Southern Equity
Pee Dee Workforce Development Board
Pikes Peak Workforce Center
Puerto Rico Department of Labor and Human Resources
Ready4Real
Red Hook Initiative
Rochester Technology & Manufacturing Association
Rogue Workforce Partnership
Ross Innovative Employment Solutions
San Diego Workforce Partnership
Saratoga-Warren-Washington Workforce Development Board
Shriver Center on Poverty Law
Skills2Compete Colorado
Southwest Alabama Partnership for Training and Employment
State University of New York Bronx Educational Opportunity Center
Staten Island Community Partnership
STL Youth Jobs
Syracuse Northeast Community Center
The Business Council of New York State, Inc.
The Center for Work Ethic Development
The Corps Network
The New York Alliance for Inclusion and Innovation
The Place
The Right Way Foundation
The Westchester County Association, Inc.
Tiny Farms
Triad of Goodwill of Central Nc
United Way of Central Iowa
United Way of Greater Union County
Urban League of St. Louis
Vinyl Siding Institute, Inc
Virginia Association of Workforce Directors
Workforce Development Board 83
Weld County
West Michigan Works!
Western MD Consortium
Westside American Job Center
WIB Inc dba Chautauqua Works
Workforce Connections - Local Workforce Development Board
Workforce Development Board of Middlesex County Inc.
Workforce Development Council of Seattle King County
Workforce Network, Inc
WorkSource Macon-Bibb/Middle Georgia Regional Commission
Worksystems