



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
HARRISBURG

THE GOVERNOR

June 10, 2014

The Honorable Glenn Thompson
United States House of Representatives
124 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Thompson:

I wrote to you last March in support of the SKILLS Act (H.R. 803) which provided much needed reform to the workforce development system. It has come to my attention that Congress will soon be considering the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), a bipartisan proposal that includes a number of the provisions contained in the SKILLS Act.

When I meet with job creators, one of their most important needs is a highly skilled workforce that is prepared to take on the jobs of the 21st century. Unfortunately, the existing workforce development system, largely created in 1998 through the Workforce Investment Act, has not evolved with the times and is not adequately serving Pennsylvania workers and businesses.

The WIOA is a strong proposal that would bring greater efficiency and accountability to the workforce development system by placing additional emphasis on the needs of businesses, who are working every day to grow our economy and create jobs. The bill maintains business led Workforce Investment Boards at the state and local levels, but eliminates a number of required appointments, allowing for smaller, more responsive boards. A more robust performance measurement system will effectively gauge program outcomes to ensure job seekers are receiving the services they need and deserve. Increased coordination between workforce and economic development programs continues initiatives already started in Pennsylvania through recently announced JOBS1st PA Regional Partnership grants aimed at better aligning workforce and economic development resources and training efforts.

Additionally, the WIOA restores 15% state set-aside funding to support innovative strategies statewide and locally. Historically, Pennsylvania used the discretionary set-aside funds to bridge the gap between mandated services at the local level and strategic needs identified by the state. Steadily increasing appropriations for core programs through FY 2020 will provide much needed certainty and will allow long-term planning to effectively serve job seekers and businesses. The ability to transfer one hundred percent of funds between the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs based on need also provides welcome flexibility.

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Finally, the WIOA makes reforms to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 aimed at strengthening services to individuals with disabilities with a goal of competitive integrated employment. There are also requirements for providing transition services to youth with disabilities as they move from secondary school to post-education or the workforce. The Pennsylvania Office of Vocational Rehabilitation is already making great strides to better serve youth with disabilities so that they can achieve employment and independent living outcomes.

In closing, the WIOA provides crucial reform to the workforce development system and I respectfully seek your support. Thank you for consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Corbett". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent flourish at the end.

TOM CORBETT
Governor