

October 31, 2008

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Steny Hoyer  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable James Clyburn  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable George Miller  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Majority Leader Hoyer, Majority Whip Clyburn, and Chairman Miller:

As organizations committed to a strong national workforce, we are writing to express our great appreciation for your inclusion of provisions designed to assist our nation's workers in the economic stimulus plan offered on the House floor on September 26<sup>th</sup>. In particular, we applauded the \$500 million in funding for workforce development programs.

Our nation's ability to emerge quickly from the current recession will rely in considerable measure on our ability to create good jobs. Our diverse coalition of organizations is focused on producing skilled workers for emerging job needs all across our economy, whether in transportation, infrastructure, green energy, or other industries. We strongly believe that workforce development is a critical component of our economic recovery, helping workers make difficult transitions; and helping communities rebuild their economies.

Over fourteen million workers annually receive assistance from our nation's workforce system and these numbers are continuing to rise as the recession deepens. Unfortunately, our ability to assist those in need is limited by our funding constraints. Since FY 2001 funding for training and employment services has been cut by over \$1.7 billion, when adjusted for inflation, yet there are 3.5 million more workers unemployed today than in 2001.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics Current Population Survey indicates that 1.9 million more American workers are unemployed today than at the beginning of this year. Along with those unemployed, 6.1 million workers can only find part time work when they would prefer to be employed full time, an increase of 1.6 million over the past year. In addition,

the latest economic forecasts project unemployment will substantially worsen in the coming months

The Center for Labor Market Studies at Northeastern University found the situation for our youth is even worse. The youth employment rate this past summer was the lowest in over sixty years, and only 32.7 percent of teens were able to obtain a summer job. In fact, the employment rate for teens was nearly one-third below employment rates in 1989, the largest decline for any demographic group in the post World War II era. If we do not address this problem, it appears inevitable that a smaller share of youth will work next summer than in any summer in modern American history

We realize there are many competing needs in our struggling economy, so we greatly appreciated the proposed \$500 million in badly needed workforce development funding for youth, dislocated workers, and reemployment services in September's stimulus package. However, given the economy's devastating impact on America's workers, **if your next economic stimulus package includes expanded overall funding, we would recommend that \$1.5 billion be designated for workforce programs in the next stimulus package, including: \$500 million for Dislocated Workers; \$500 million for disadvantaged Youth; \$250 million for low income Adults; and \$250 million for reemployment services targeted to those most likely to exhaust their unemployment benefits.** This additional funding would allow the workforce system to provide employment related assistance to hundreds of thousands of job seekers and training for up to 350,000 additional workers.

Thank you for your leadership in recognizing the need to assist America's workers through these investments in workforce development and transition assistance -- essential to creating new jobs, to helping workers fill those new jobs, and to restoring our economic engine.

Sincerely,

American Association of Community Colleges (AACC)  
American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO)  
American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)  
American Federation of Teachers (AFT)  
Association of Farmworker Opportunity Programs (AFOP)  
Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)  
The Corps Network  
Easter Seals  
Experience Works  
Goodwill Industries International  
National Association of Development Organizations (NADO)  
National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA)  
National Association of Workforce Boards (NAWB)  
National Association of Workforce Development Professionals (NAWDP)  
National Center on Education and the Economy (NCEE)

National Workforce Association (NWA)

National Youth Employment Coalition (NYEC)

United States Conference of Mayors (USCM)

USA Works!

Wider Opportunities for Women

Women Work! The National Network for Women's Employment

The Workforce Alliance