

ADDRESSING LITERACY NEEDS OF THE NATION'S WORKFORCE

1. **WHEREAS**, literacy is the foundation on which a skilled and educated workforce is built; and
2. **WHEREAS**, a large segment of the population in local communities is not prepared to meet the rapidly changing demands of the 21st century workplace due to lack of core and fundamental education and skill levels; and
3. **WHEREAS**, at the beginning of the 21st century, eleven million Americans are unable to read a bus schedule or fill out a job application; and
4. **WHEREAS**, according to The Center on Market Labor Studies at Northeastern University, by 2030 literacy rates will have fallen by approximately 11 percent nationally, largely due to the increase of immigrant populations, many of whom have low educational attainment; and
5. **WHEREAS**, by 2010 the labor force will fall short of meeting the demands of an estimated 58 million job openings by more than 4.8 million workers; and
6. **WHEREAS**, employers are faced with the challenges of future tight labor markets and increasing demands for higher skill levels with 77 million baby boomers preparing to retire; and
7. **WHEREAS**, Over the past 30 years, the United States has fallen from 3rd to 15th in producing scientists and engineers while other developed nations are increasingly providing workers with advanced skills training; and
8. **WHEREAS**, over the next ten years the largest growth in the workforce will be in the age category of 55 and over, who will need to be retrained to meet the skill requirements of the technologically advancing workplace; and

9. **WHEREAS**, within the coming 25 years the majority of the growth in the workforce, 19 percent, will be a result of Hispanic immigration; and
10. **WHEREAS**, the largest growing segment of the youth labor force is largely minority and immigrant and mostly concentrated in areas of cities that have the lowest socioeconomic data; and
11. **WHEREAS**, low-wage, low-skilled workers, youth out-of-school, at-risk in-school youth, returning offenders, people moving from welfare to work, the long-term unemployed, other hard-to-employ individuals, immigrants and older workers are the same populations not equipped for jobs in a 21st century workforce and tend to reside in cities where socioeconomic statistics are lowest; and
12. **WHEREAS**, in 2004 76 percent of Hispanics, 46 percent of Black and 35 percent of White immigrants 16-64 years old had a high school diploma or less; and
13. **WHEREAS**, successful literacy training enhances and further develops skills in reading, mathematics, technology and social interaction; and
14. **WHEREAS**, cities are where more youth are dropping out of school, are at-risk of dropping out, and are least prepared to enter the workforce; and
15. **WHEREAS**, the growing areas in manufacturing, education, professional and business, health and social services will require advanced levels of education and job training skills - a minimum of a two year degree or equivalent certificate; and
16. **WHEREAS**, Americans simply cannot compete in the global economy if the United States fails to invest in their education and skills training; and
17. **WHEREAS**, federal investments in workforce funding have decreased by over \$1 billion since FY 2002, and the Administration continues to propose cuts to the nation's education and training budgets,
18. **WHEREAS**, despite the great need, the Administration's FY 2007 budget proposes to level fund Adult Basic

State Grants which provide funding for adult education including Adult Basic Education (ABE), Adult Secondary education including GED and other high school equivalency programs, and English Literacy, which is \$30 million below the FY 2002 funding level,

19. **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that The U.S. Conference of Mayors urges Congress and the President to enhance the current comprehensive literacy training, which is vital to connecting individuals to educational opportunities and the workplace; and
20. **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that The U.S. Conference of Mayors calls for Congress and the Administration to increase the investment in education and literacy - including Adult Basic State Grants which provide funding for adult education including Adult Basic Education (ABE), Adult Secondary education including GED and other high school equivalency programs, and English Literacy - and job training programs to a minimum of FY 2002 funding levels; and
21. **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that The U.S. Conference of Mayors calls on Congress and the Administration to allow for greater coordination and flexibility at the local level between the education and workforce systems to address the growing need for a skilled and educated workforce for the 21st century global workforce through legislative language; and
22. **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that The U.S. Conference of Mayors calls on Congress, the Administration, and business to expand funding, especially student-aid, and flexibility for access to postsecondary education opportunities for both in- and out-of-school youth and adults - including career, technical, 2-year community colleges and 4-year institutions including using the PELL Grant program year- round; and
23. **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that The U.S. Conference of Mayors urges Congress, the Administration, and business to provide funding, especially student-aid, for greater access and support for part-time postsecondary education opportunities for working adults during working hours and complimentary to working schedules to allow movement up career ladders.

Projected Cost: Unknown