

United States Senate  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 5, 2007

**SUPPORT AMERICA'S JOB TRAINING SYSTEM**

Dear Colleague,

We invite you to join us in sending the attached letter to Chairman Harkin and Ranking Member Specter, expressing our strong support to restore funding Workforce Investment Act (WIA) and Employment Service (ES) programs through FY 2008 Labor, HHS, Education Appropriations at FY05 levels.

In today's fast-paced global economy, the American workforce continues to undergo profound changes that require workers to acquire advanced skills to maintain the nation's competitiveness. That is why the need to invest public resources in education and job training is so crucial.

WIA, the federal government's core job training program, is an employer led system that provides skills training for a demand driven economy, providing workers with the skills that employers need. This year, 15 million workers, or more than one in ten workers nationally, will seek assistance from our nation's employment and training programs. This need for skilled workers will only increase as competition in the global economy intensifies. Unless we invest in a system that can adequately meet employers' needs for skilled workers, we will not effectively compete in the global economy and our economic prosperity will suffer.

Despite this, the President's FY 2008 budget does not reflect America's economic reality. Under the President's proposal, WIA and ES funding would be cut to \$4.3 billion, \$1 billion less than what Congress enacted in FY 2005. If enacted, these cuts would force One Stop Career Centers around the nation to close their doors and our ability to train our most valuable economic resource, our workers, will be greatly diminished, threatening our nation's economic security.

We believe that investing in a skilled workforce is important to our nation's economic strength and hope that you will join us in supporting America's job training system. Please call Livia Lam in Senator Cantwell's office at 4-3441 or Amanda Woods at 4-4751 in Senator Collin's office's to sign on to the attached letter.

Sincerely,



Maria Cantwell



Susan Collins

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 5, 2007

The Honorable Tom Harkin  
Chairman, Subcommittee on Labor  
Health and Human Services, and Education  
131 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Arlen Specter  
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Labor  
Health and Human Services, and Education  
156 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Harkin and Ranking Member Specter:

We are writing to express our strong support for the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) programs and request that these programs be funded at no less than fiscal year 2005 levels in the fiscal year 2007 Labor, HHS, and Education Appropriations bill.

Earlier this month, Microsoft Chairman Bill Gates gave impassioned remarks before the HELP Committee about the importance of education and training to expand economic opportunity and compete in the global economy. Mr. Gates told the Senate HELP Committee:

"Federal, state, and local governments must help to prepare all of our workers for the jobs required in a knowledge economy. Workforce enhancement should be treated as a matter of national competitive survival. It is a down-payment on our future, an extremely vital step to secure American competitiveness for future generations and to honor the American ideal that every single one of us deserves the opportunity to participate in America's success".

Gates' remarks mirror Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke's remarks this month to the Omaha Chamber of Commerce:

"Policies that boost our national investment in education and training can help reduce inequality while expanding economic opportunity. A substantial body of research demonstrates that investments in education and training pay high rates of return both to individuals and to the society at large".

Our nation's business and economic leaders are committed to investing in training American workers. Now the government must also demonstrate a similar level of commitment. That is why we are troubled by the Administration's budget, which would slash \$1 billion from WIA and employment service programs -- a 19 percent cut. WIA formula programs would be cut by \$639 million, with another \$335 million rescission of current year formula funding.

This year, over 13 million workers, almost one in ten workers nationally, will seek assistance from our nation's employment and training programs. If approved, these cuts

