

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 21, 2026

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito
Chair
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education, and Related Agencies
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education, and Related Agencies
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chair Capito and Ranking Member Baldwin,

As you develop the Fiscal Year (FY) 2027 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education appropriations bill, we urge you to include strong, robust investments in job training and adult education programs so that U.S. workers and businesses have access to the skills they need to grow the economy and maintain our nation's competitive edge in the 21st century. Your continued support for federal workforce programs authorized by the bipartisan Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) is critical to ensure the stability of our economy and the livelihoods of workers across the country.

The FY 2027 appropriations bill represents a critical opportunity to build on Congress' vision for WIOA – a demand-driven workforce system that is responsive to the needs of employers and can help workers access jobs and credentials – and its funding is critical to the success of this mission. Robust funding is key for this potential to be realized – making the outcome of this year's budget and appropriations process critically important.

Emerging trends indicate potential challenges in the labor market. Recent data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics show that unemployment is gradually rising while job openings are declining. There are not enough available positions for the 7.4 million people who are currently unemployed. The economy is also not meeting the needs of the more than 10.7 million people who are underemployed or out of the labor force but want a job. This imbalance underscores the urgent need for greater workforce investments – particularly funding for career and support services, which create better training completion outcomes and facilitate continued employment.

Additionally, automation and generative artificial intelligence (AI) are reshaping the labor market, accelerating disruption, and increasing the need for opportunities to train, retrain, and upskill workers throughout their careers. As this threat looms large, workers and voters overwhelmingly support providing AI-literacy skills training to workers and supporting workers who may become displaced by automation and AI. In fact, more than two-thirds of voters believe that AI is a serious or very serious problem currently faced by American workers, and 85 percent of voters would support a policy that provides skills retraining at no cost to any worker who loses their job due to automation or artificial intelligence.

Maintaining robust funding for WIOA implementation is necessary for state, local, and regional workforce development stakeholders to fully carry out crucial legislative reforms. Doing so will improve our nation's economic competitiveness and put in place comprehensive workforce strategies that support national priorities such as rebuilding our infrastructure. With meaningful investments, programs across the nation will help workers gain the skills to support themselves and their families and ensure employers will have access to the skilled workforce they need to compete in the global economy.

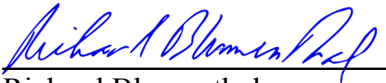
In order to enhance the skills of the U.S. workforce, we urge you to:

- Increase funding for WIOA Title I (job training programs) by at least 10 percent – including state formula grants under Title 1-B (youth programs, adult programs, and dislocated worker programs) – to meet the scope and scale of need for states, localities, and other partners to support workers;
- Provide \$810 million for WIOA Title II (adult education and literacy programs) at levels to respond to the current worker need and business demand;
- Increase funding for WIOA Title III (Wagner-Peyser Employment Services) to give states necessary, additional resources to provide WIOA's career information and intensive reemployment services;
- Fund WIOA Title IV (vocational rehabilitation program and other employment services) at levels authorized for adults and students with disabilities;
- Provide robust funding for the Workforce Data Quality Initiative Grant to enable states to provide useful information about skills, employment, and earning outcomes to help businesses fill skilled positions;
- Expand apprenticeship programs registered under the National Apprenticeship Act by increasing Congressional investment to \$350 million for FY 2027;
- Provide \$6.5 million for the Women in Apprenticeship and Nontraditional Occupations program to help employers and labor unions recruit, train, and retain women for nontraditional employment opportunities;
- Provide dedicated investments to support sector partnerships so workforce boards, labor, community-based organizations, businesses, community colleges, training providers, and other workforce stakeholders can work together to train and hire workers for in-demand jobs within their communities; and
- Increase funding for career and support services, which support better training completion outcomes and facilitate continued employment.

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Thank you for your attention to these critical issues. We look forward to working with you to ensure that our investments in the U.S. workforce are sufficient to meet the needs of America's workers and businesses.

Sincerely,



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



Angela D. Alsobrooks
United States Senator



Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator



Lisa Blunt Rochester
United States Senator



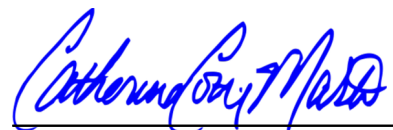
Cory A. Booker
United States Senator



Maria Cantwell
United States Senator



Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator



Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senator



Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator

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Ruben Gallego
United States Senator



Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator



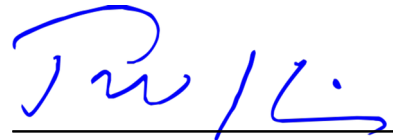
Martin Heinrich
United States Senator



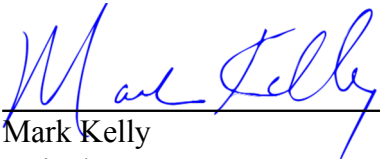
John Hickenlooper
United States Senator



Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator



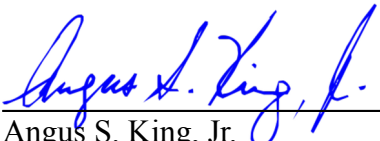
Tim Kaine
United States Senator



Mark Kelly
United States Senator



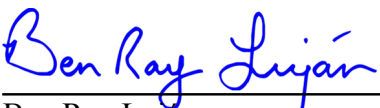
Andy Kim
United States Senator



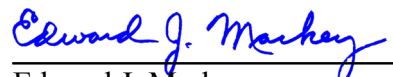
Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator

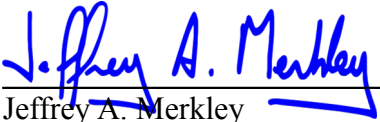


Ben Ray Lujan
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator

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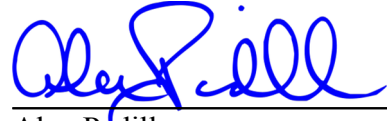
Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator



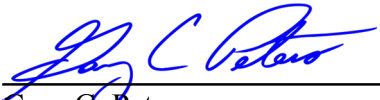
Christopher S. Murphy
United States Senator



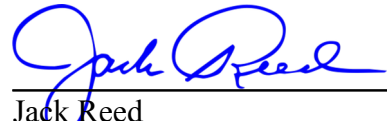
Jon Ossoff
United States Senator



Alex Padilla
United States Senator



Gary C. Peters
United States Senator



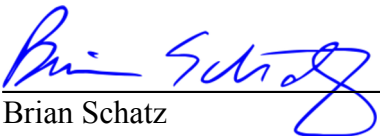
Jack Reed
United States Senator



Jacky Rosen
United States Senator



Bernard Sanders
United States Senator



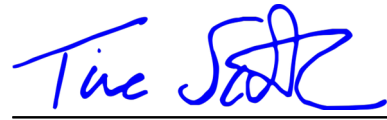
Brian Schatz
United States Senator



Adam B. Schiff
United States Senator



Elissa Slotkin
United States Senator

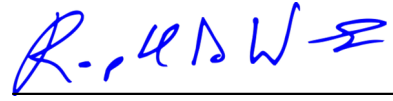


Tina Smith
United States Senator

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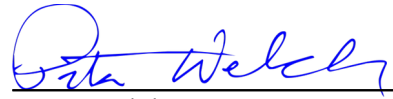
Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



Raphael Warnock
United States Senator



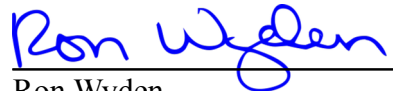
Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



Peter Welch
United States Senator



Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator



Ron Wyden
United States Senator