

Los Angeles Workforce Systems Collaborative

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April 16, 2020

The Honorable Nita M. Lowey
Chairwoman
House Appropriations
Committee
2365 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kay Granger
Ranking Member
House Appropriations
Committee
1026 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
304 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Vice Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
437 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

RE: Economic Stimulus

Dear Chairwoman Lowey, Ranking Member Granger, Chairman Shelby and Vice Chairman Leahy:

On behalf of the Los Angeles Workforce Systems Collaborative, we write to commend you on your leadership in developing and introducing a bold stimulus package, which is critical to bolstering the nation's economy and getting people back to work – with funding for workforce development programs as a critical component for achieving this goal.

The Los Angeles Workforce Systems Collaborative is a multi-stakeholder collaboration comprised of the region's education, government, workforce development, business, and community leaders committed to developing a robust and comprehensive economic and workforce development system to meet the employment and educational needs of our region's low-income and underserved communities. The Collaborative leverages the collective and individual assets of its partners to create career pathways to living-wage jobs and is committed to improving the economic and social mobility of Los Angeles' workers.

As Congress continues to work to address the COVID-19 pandemic and its economic impacts, the L.A. Workforce Systems Collaborative strongly encourages you to invest in a comprehensive national workforce development strategy that supports workers to reenter the workforce after job loss, businesses to minimize further job loss, creates new jobs, and prepares workers and students for both today's in-demand jobs and those leading to economic growth after the pandemic.

The views expressed in this correspondence are supported by the signatories. The Los Angeles Workforce Systems Collaborative partners not included as signatories are not necessarily party to the views expressed herein.

The COVID-19 pandemic's initial disruptions to the labor market and its current economic impacts on workers, businesses, and communities are well-known. The nation needs a comprehensive workforce development strategy that addresses continued and sustained disruptions and the potential enormous permanent shifts to the labor market. 36 million U.S. workers have basic skills needs and 48 million lack digital literacy skills. A disproportionate concentration of those workers were previously employed in industries like food service and retail and have been most impacted by job loss during the pandemic. Those jobs are unlikely to return at the same magnitude or manner following the crisis as our economy shifts towards pandemic response and new innovations around virtual modes of working to stop the spread of COVID-19. Reemployment, skilling and reskilling for in-demand jobs will be critical during the pandemic and its aftermath to ensure the best outcomes for workers and employers across the country.

Our country's investments in active labor market policies are lower than every other industrialized nation, except Mexico. To reach even the median level among our global peers, the United States would need to invest an extra \$80 billion annually. As Congress prepares to finalize the next stimulus package, we strongly urge the following priorities below to be included. These investments will support workers, students, businesses, and communities across the country and bolster our nation's ability to respond to future disruptions whether health, environmental, trade or technology related.

Provide comprehensive income, healthcare, and re-training support to displaced workers

- Make \$5 billion available in an expanded Trade Adjustment Assistance for Workers to include workers displaced because of COVID-19 and its economic impact and ensure a streamlined qualification process to maximize eligibility;
- \$10 billion in a Universal Dislocated Worker Fund to ensure that all workers, including contingent workers, can access income, health care and retraining support services;

Support safety net recipients access training and employment in family-supporting jobs

- Direct federal agencies to waive work requirements for accessing benefits under Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Medicaid and other means-tested programs to ensure recipients have time to upskill and re-skill to get back into good, family-supporting jobs - including suspending a new rule that would make it harder for workers to access Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits for Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWDs);
- \$5 billion to reinvest in the TANF Emergency Contingency Fund (TANF ECF), modernizing the program to ensure workers with the greatest skill needs have access to subsidized jobs and training to prepare for in-demand industries so recipients can receive the training and employment assistance to succeed in good, family-supporting jobs;

Additional Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) investments to ensure our public workforce system can best serve workers and employers

- \$6 billion in WIOA Title I funding to expand access to training programs that help adult workers who lost their jobs, and young people to rapidly train them for available jobs;
- \$1 billion in WIOA Title II to support education for workers' literacy, numeracy, and digital skills to help upskill and reskill to keep their jobs during this crisis;
- \$2 billion for summer youth employment programs over the next 2 years;

Support local business-led workforce strategies to avert layoffs

- Expand the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) to provide businesses with tax credit of up to \$10,000 for costs associated with on-the-job learning and skills training for incumbent workers;
- Expand Short-Time Compensation for workers whose employers are forced to cut hours so employers can retain workers while still reducing costs and allows workers to maintain income levels without needing to access their full UI benefit to which they'd be eligible if laid off completely;

Invest in post-secondary education to respond to student, worker, and employer needs

- Invest \$6 billion in Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) Community College Training Partnership grants over the next 3 years to support effective community college/business partnerships for in-demand training, including establishing apprenticeship programs and developing short-term credentials that allow for rapid re-employment;
- Expand access to Pell grants for high-quality short-term credentials in in-demand industries;

Strengthen Career Technical Education (CTE) to prepare students for in-demand jobs

- Invest an additional \$5 billion in Carl D. Perkins V funding to provide critical support to CTE programs and allow the development of alternative online instructional modalities, such as Augmented/Virtual Reality. CTE programs will be essential for retraining dislocated workers and this additional funding would allow rapid delivery of this training and secure future CTE efforts to ensure workforce readiness for in-demand jobs;

Create jobs through workforce investments as part of infrastructure projects

- Include workforce training and re-employment funding in federal infrastructure proposals to include comprehensive training and support services with a focus on those who have been disproportionately impacted by racial inequities in education and labor policy.

We encourage Congress to explore every possible avenue for job creation and workforce development, which will be critical to bolstering the nation's economy and getting people back to work during and after this pandemic. We believe it is important to strengthen our nation's workforce development system to address the needs of our most vulnerable workers and enable access to good, family-supporting jobs through training and employment assistance.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Eric Garcetti
Mayor, City of Los Angeles



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Chancellor
Los Angeles Community College District





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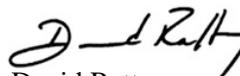
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CC: Speaker Nancy Pelosi
House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy
Representative Jim Clyburn
Representative Steny Hoyer
Representative Lucille Roybal-Allard
Representative Maxine Waters
Representative Ted Lieu
Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell
Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer
Senator Dianne Feinstein
Senator Kamala Harris