

May 30, 2014

The Honorable Tom Harkin
Chairman
Committee on Health, Education,
Labor and Pensions

The Honorable Lamar Alexander
Ranking Minority Member
Committee on Health, Education,
Labor and Pensions

The Honorable Patty Murray
Committee on Health, Education,
Labor and Pensions

The Honorable Johnny Isakson
Ranking Minority Member
Subcommittee on Employment and
Workplace Safety

Dear Senators Harkin, Alexander, Murray, and Isakson:

On behalf of the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) and the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT), which represent the nation's more than 1,100 community college presidents and their trustees, we write in support the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).

Workforce development is at the core of our members' mission, and as such reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act has long been a priority for our associations. Community colleges play a leading role in providing workers with the skills they need in the 21st century economy at all stages in their careers and educational development. We are hopeful that the improvements made to the workforce development system in WIOA will enhance the partnership between our colleges and the workforce system, and that this reauthorization will provide the impetus towards improved funding for these vital programs.

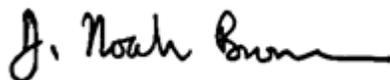
We are pleased to see many elements of this bill align with our priorities for reauthorization. Community colleges strongly support the steps that have been taken in this legislation to align the various components of the workforce system and refocus their efforts on the attainment of postsecondary credentials. AACC and ACCT support the inclusion of common performance indicators across programs, as well as greater emphasis on the transition to postsecondary education in the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act.

Additionally, we support provisions in the bill that call for integrated delivery of basic skills and occupational instruction. AACC and ACCT continue to support these career pathway models, as well as the bill's emphasis on sector partnerships. We are also pleased that the bill formally eliminates the sequence of services in favor of an integrated career services category. Since FY 2010, funding for workforce and adult education programs under WIA has declined significantly. While the authorization levels under WIOA uphold some of these reductions in the near-term, it also provides for a much needed yearly increase in authorization levels.

We applaud the efforts you have led to craft a bicameral, bipartisan bill that will better align the federal workforce system and ultimately better serve workers seeking new or improved employment opportunities. We look forward to working with you as the bill progresses to final passage in both chambers.



Walter G. Bumphus
AACC President and CEO



J. Noah Brown
ACCT President and CEO