

June 12, 2024

The Honorable Bernie Sanders
Chairman
Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions
Committee
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Bill Cassidy
Ranking Member
Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions
Committee
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Sanders and Ranking Member Cassidy:

On behalf of Business Roundtable, an association of more than 200 chief executive officers of America's leading companies, thank you for holding a hearing on "The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act: Supporting Efforts to Meet the Needs of Youth, Workers, and Employers." A longstanding priority for Business Roundtable CEOs has been to reform the public workforce development system to make it more flexible, more responsive to employers and more capable of training workers at scale. We ask that you include this letter in the hearing record.

The public workforce development system is not keeping up with the economy. Too few Americans – particularly those with employment barriers – can access needed training, and too few businesses utilize the system as a solution to evolving workforce needs. The need for a better system has become even more important given persistent tightness in the labor market and rapidly changing skills needs due to new technologies. Improving how the federal government invests in workforce development – and how states and localities administer services – can help address these challenges and deliver greater economic opportunity and upward mobility for American workers.

In modernizing WIOA, you can build a more effective, efficient workforce development system by:

- **Directing more funding to training a greater number of Americans for in-demand, fulfilling careers.** Currently, too few WIOA funds are used for skills development and too few WIOA participants are receiving training. We recommend dedicating a minimum amount of WIOA funding – ideally, at least 50 percent of adult and dislocated worker funding – toward upskilling workers through individual training accounts, on-the-job learning and other industry-led training.
- **Promoting high-quality employer-driven training.** Programs led by or in partnership with businesses are the most effective models for skills development and career

advancement. We recommend removing unnecessary limitations on the use of WIOA funds for high-quality employer-driven programs such as on-the-job and incumbent worker training and incentivizing community colleges and other high-quality providers to work with local businesses to offer work-based learning and employer-designed programs.

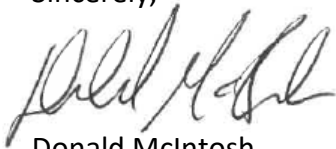
- **Empowering states to structure workforce systems that meet economic needs and deliver for workers.** Too often, unnecessary federal mandates keep states and local communities from effectively partnering with businesses to upskill and employ workers. We recommend providing governors with greater flexibility to restructure their state workforce development systems to meet their regional workforce needs while also instilling strong accountability and performance measures.

Business Roundtable supported¹ the U.S. House of Representatives' strong bipartisan passage of H.R. 6655, A Stronger Workforce for America Act. We urge you to consider it as a foundation for crafting a bipartisan Senate WIOA modernization bill.

In addition to WIOA, Business Roundtable continues to advocate for other important workforce development policies such as expanding Pell Grant eligibility for students pursuing high-quality, short-term education and training programs. In fact, leveraging such short-term Pell programs through WIOA, as A Stronger Workforce for America Act does, would further increase workers' access to upskilling opportunities and help accelerate career advancement.

Thank you for the Committee's continued leadership on creating a workforce system that expands opportunity for all and helps equip American workers with the skills needed to succeed in in-demand careers. We remain committed to working with you to build this ever-ready U.S. workforce.

Sincerely,



Donald McIntosh
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Business Roundtable
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¹ See Letter from Scott Kirby, Chief Executive Officer, United Airlines, and Chair, Education and Workforce Committee, Business Roundtable, to Members of the U.S. House of Representatives (Apr. 8, 2024), available at <https://s3.amazonaws.com/brt.org/2024.04.08-BRTKirbyLetter-AStrongerWorkforceforAmericaAct.pdf>.