

TO: Executive Committee

DATE: 4/7/08

FROM: WIB Staff

For Action

For Information

For Discussion

SUBJECT: Advocacy

PROPOSED MOTION(S): Information only.

DISCUSSION: Two Letters were sent to Congressman Dennis Cardoza on March 11th urging him to include Workforce Investment Act programs and funding in his letter to the Labor-Health and Human Services Appropriations Subcommittee outlining his key fiscal year 09 program priorities. The letters were sent by our WIB and the Merced County Board of Supervisors.

Another two letters were sent—one to Congressman Cardoza asking him to attend a breakfast with our WIB members who were visiting Washington, DC, and another letter expressing the WIB's interest in the proposed Merced County Career and Technical Education (CTE) Concurrent Courses Partnership. A letter was also sent to Assemblymember John Laird asking him for support to sustain the funding level of \$46,790,000 in 2008-2009 for the Economic and Workforce Development (EWD) program.

ATTACHMENT(S):

**Three letters to Congressman Cardoza
One letter to Ms. Joanne Wang Golann
One letter to Assemblymember John Laird**



**WORKFORCE
INVESTMENT BOARD**
MERCED COUNTY

Robert Harmon, Chair
Albert Montejano, 1st Vice Chair
Don Bergman, 2nd Vice Chair
1880 West Wardrobe Ave. Merced, CA 95341
Phone (209)725-3593 FAX (209)725-3592
www.co.merced.ca.us/wi/wib/wib.html

March 11, 2008

The Honorable Dennis Cardoza
United States House of Representatives
435 Cannon HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Cardoza:

I am writing to urge you to include Workforce Investment Act (WIA) programs/funding in your letter to the Labor-HHS Appropriations Subcommittee outlining your key FY 09 program priorities.

For the first time in the past several years, unemployment rates have begun to rise and more than 7.6 million Americans are unemployed. WIA programs are at the forefront of assisting those impacted by the current economic slowdown, helping workers get the assistance and training they need to return to the workforce. This year, over 14 million workers, one in ten workers nationally, will seek assistance from our nation's employment and training programs.

In Merced, WIA is making a real difference in our community. We have seen a substantial increase in the number of individuals seeking our services. County residents know that the One-Stop Career Centers, Worknet of Merced County, are the place to go to connect to the labor market. Worknet had 44,620 visits in "06/07", including 4,215 new customers. In January 2008, we have experienced an increase in both visits and new customers to Worknet, well above our six-year average for that month. In program year "06/07" we enrolled 778 adults with 501 getting jobs. We served 158 businesses with 834 services. Youth programs, although half the size they were in program year 02/03, helped 636 young people stay in school, obtain their High School diploma and get jobs.

However, investment in employment and training programs continues to diminish. In fact, the Administration's FY 09 budget proposes funding WIA and Employment Services \$1.2 billion below funding levels enacted this past year. The Administration's proposal not only seeks to cut WIA programs by \$484 million, but also eliminates the Employment Service program.

In the knowledge-driven global economy, American businesses report skills shortages at all levels of employment. Exasperating the problem is the large portion of the workforce near retirement, many of whom are in highly skilled professions. Unfortunately, many current and potential workers don't have the knowledge and skills to take their place or fill the emerging employment needs. The Workforce Investment Act is specifically designed to address these needs.

Congressman Cardoza
March 11, 2008
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I strongly urge you to include WIA funding as a priority in your program letter to House Labor-HHS Chairman David Obey and Ranking Member Jim Walsh.

Thank you for considering this request. In challenging economic times we must ensure our nation's workers have access to critical WIA services.

Sincerely,

Robert Harmon
Chairman



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February 4, 2008

Ms. Joanne Wang Golann, Senior Research Assistant
Community College Research Center
Box 174 Teachers College
525 West 120th Street
New York, NY 10027-6696

Dear Ms. Golann:

This letter serves to express the Merced County Workforce Investment Board's (WIB) interest in the proposed Merced County Career & Technical Education (CTE) Concurrent Courses Partnership. If selected to receive a grant from the James Irvine Foundation, this Partnership will be used to strengthen existing collaborative CTE efforts among educational institutions and local businesses, to improve enrollment in CTE courses for low-income and other underrepresented students, and to expand upon dual enrollment CTE courses offered throughout Merced County in targeted industry sectors.

The WIB serves several hundred jobseekers each year who need vocational education and training, and would benefit from CTE education in the field of Health and Agriculture. Representatives from the WIB will participate in this project by providing Labor Market Information and Industry expertise to Regional Occupation Program (ROP) project staff and the CTE Professional Learning Council (PLC).

The WIB has worked collaboratively with MCOE and the ROP for several years. We believe that working together to educate Merced County's youth provides numerous benefits for employers and residents alike. The work of the Concurrent Courses Partnership will complement and further these efforts, with particular emphasis on benefiting underrepresented students.

Merced County has one of the highest unemployment rates in the State, as well as a poverty rate above 22%. Collaborations among high schools, colleges, and industry representatives are essential to providing young people with career options, as well as preparing the future workforce needed to sustain our economy. It would be a pleasure for our staff to assist with MCOE's proposed CTE Concurrent Courses Partnership, and we look forward to hearing back from you in this regard.

Sincerely,

Andrea T. Baker
Executive Director

"Merced County's Workforce Investment system will keep pace with the new growth, the emerging economy, and the ever changing needs of the employers by creating a better educated, highly skilled workforce, that's capable, and prepared, and thoroughly knowledgeable."



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April 2, 2008

The Honorable John Laird
Assemblymember
Chair, CA State Assembly Committee on Budget
State Capitol, PO Box 942849
Sacramento, CA 94249-0027

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I am writing to ask for your support in sustaining the funding level of \$46,790,000 in 2008-2009 for the Economic & Workforce (EWD) program, comprised of a network of 115 EWD Initiative Centers. The Workforce Investment Board and our One-Stop Career Center, Worknet of Merced, utilizes the services of the Merced College Workplace Learning Resource Center (WpLRC), an EWD Initiative. The WpLRC provides education and training services for Worknet with positive outcomes realized by our jobseekers and the companies that employ them. We want to continue this valuable partnership.

EWD programs, such as the Merced College WpLRC, help the economy of the state and is a wise investment:

- Legislated in 1991, and its basic funding is vital for bringing in outside investment to the community.
- A network of 115 centers shows a benefit-to-cost ratio of 4-1.
- 3,500 jobs are created, 4,000 jobs retained and benefits the state's economy through increased wages, business profitability and taxes paid annually.
- The services have a wide range of beneficiaries—students, workers, colleges and businesses.
- Supports the largest Small Business Development Center network in the United States.

Support Economic & Workforce Development in California:

- The program is not part of the CC System's growth formula; therefore, proposed cuts become actual reductions in the program.
- The program was cut by \$6 million mid-year for 2007-08 – nearly 13% reduction.
- Each reduction *exponentially hurts* the effectiveness and leveraging capability of the program.
- The program was created for economic recovery and stimulus, and still serves this purpose.

Please Sustain the Economic and Workforce Development funding at level of \$46,790,000 in 08-09!

Sincerely,

Andrea T. Baker, Director
Workforce Investment Board

"Merced County's Workforce Investment system will keep pace with the new growth, the emerging economy, and the ever changing needs of the employers by creating a better educated, highly skilled workforce, that's capable, and prepared, and thoroughly knowledgeable."



March 12, 2008

The Honorable Dennis Cardoza
United States House of Representatives
435 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Cardoza:

I am writing to request your support of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) programs/funding in your letter to the Labor-HHS Appropriations Subcommittee as one of your key FY 09 program priorities.

For the first time in the past several years, unemployment rates have begun to rise and more than 7.6 million Americans are unemployed. WIA programs are at the forefront of assisting those impacted by the current economic slowdown, helping workers get the assistance and training they need to return to the workforce. This year, over 14 million workers, one in ten workers nationally, will seek assistance from our nation's employment and training programs.

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Please consider including WIA funding as a priority in your program letter to House Labor-HHS Chairman David Obey and Ranking Member Jim Walsh. Thank you for considering this request. In challenging economic times, we must ensure our nation's workers have access to critical WIA services.

Sincerely,

Kathleen M. Crookham
Chairman, Merced County Board of Supervisors

Board of Supervisors

John Pedrozo
Supervisor, District One

Kathleen M. Crookham
Supervisor, District Two

Michael G. Nelson
Supervisor, District Three

Deidre F. Kelsey
Supervisor, District Four

Jerry O'Banion
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