

TO: Workforce Investment Board

DATE: 05/10/07

FROM: WIB Staff

For Action

For Information

For Discussion

SUBJECT: Dear Colleague Letter

PROPOSED MOTION(S): Information only.

DISCUSSION: On April 25, 2007 (Wednesday), the California Workforce Association (CWA) notified Local Workforce Investment Areas (LWIAs) that a House Dear Colleague Letter was being circulated that was soliciting support for WIA funding restoration in FY 08 to 2005 levels. The Dear Colleague Letter had a deadline of noon, Friday, April 27, 2007. CWA requested LWIAs to contact their congressional representatives asking them to sign on to the letter.

Attached is the Tierney (D-MA) and Keller (R-FL) Dear Colleague Letter and the Merced County Workforce Investment Board response to Congressman Cardoza. The WIB letter was emailed through Congressman Cardoza's Modesto office and also sent hard copy by mail.

ATTACHMENT(S):

WIB Letter

Dear Colleague Letter



**WORKFORCE
INVESTMENT BOARD**
MERCED COUNTY

Robert Harmon, Chair
Mike Sullivan, 1st Vice Chair
Albert Montejano, 2nd Vice Chair
1880 West Wardrobe Ave. Merced, CA 95340
Phone (209)725-3593 FAX (209)725-3592
www.co.merced.ca.us/wi/wib/wib.html

April 25, 2007

The Honorable Dennis Cardoza
435 Cannon Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Cardoza:

Subject: Support for Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Dear Colleague Letter

This letter is to express our strong encouragement for you to sign on to the Dear Colleague letter expressing support for a FY 08 appropriations increase for Job Training and Workforce Development (see attached).

The economic strength of our communities largely depends on the availability of a highly skilled and trained workforce. WIA provides workers with the skills employers need for a strong economy. Those same skills lead to self-sufficiency and prosperity for workers through higher wages, access to benefits, and upward career mobility.

Including this program year starting July 1, 2007, California has suffered a devastating 40% reduction in WIA funds to assist businesses and workers. Potentially compounding this already steep cut, the Administration's FY 2008 budget proposal for employment and training is for an unprecedented \$1.1 billion reduction, or 19% below our already dramatically reduced current funding levels.

The attached Dear Colleague letter from Congressmen John Tierney (D-MA) and Ric Keller (R-FL) requests a reversal of this trend, and recommends a modest recovery to FY 2005 funding levels.

State and local workforce leaders have had to cut staff and essential services for workers and businesses, at exactly the same time as workers are changing jobs more frequently than ever, usually with losses in both wages and benefits, and businesses are struggling to fill shortages in critical skills. These cuts are experienced most acutely at the local level, across every region of California. We in Merced are seeing reductions in key trainings for registered and licensed vocational nurses. The number of youth being served gets smaller each year. We are being forced to consider closing one of our three Worknet Employment Resource Centers. Our service delivery system cannot afford another cut.

We strongly urge your support for this FY 08 Dear Colleague Letter seeking an improved investment in the nation's and California's workers and business. Your support will pay dividends by building a stronger economy, one built on the skills of the American workforce.

Thank you for your attention.

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."

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

April 23, 2007

Support Job Training and Workforce Development

**The Labor, HHS, Education Appropriations Subcommittee has confirmed that this
is a programmatic request.**

Deadline: Noon, Friday, April 27, 2007

Dear Colleague:

We write to encourage you to sign the attached letter to the Chairman and Ranking Member of the House Appropriations Committee's Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education to support increased funding for Workforce Investment Act (WIA) programs.

A skilled workforce is essential to our nation's economic security. WIA programs provide critical job training and related services to unemployed or underemployed individuals across the country. The Administration's Fiscal Year 2008 budget proposal requests WIA and ES funding to be cut by \$1 billion. If approved, these cuts may force many of our districts' One Stop Career Centers to close their doors, leaving many workers without the proper training resources. Our ability to be competitive in the global economy could be seriously undermined.

Please join us in sending a letter to the Chairman and Ranking Member of the House Appropriations Committee's Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education to support increased funding for Workforce Investment Act (WIA) programs. The letter requests the Fiscal Year 2005 level of funding, which was \$5.338 billion.

Please feel free to contact us or our staffs (Earl Hadley with Rep. Tierney at 225-8020 or Lucy House with Rep. Keller at 225-2176) with any questions or to sign on to the letter.

Sincerely,



John F. Tierney
Member of Congress



Ric Keller
Member of Congress

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

April 27, 2007

The Honorable Dave Obey
Chairman
House Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and
Human Services (HHS) and
Education
2358 Rayburn House
Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Ranking Member James Walsh
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and
Human Services (HHS) and
Education
1016 Longworth House
Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Obey and Ranking Member Walsh:

We are writing to express our strong support for Workforce Investment Act (WIA) programs and to respectfully request that these programs be funded at no less than Fiscal Year 2005 levels in the Fiscal Year 2008 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations bill.

The Administration's Fiscal Year 2008 budget proposal requests \$1 billion in cuts to WIA and Employment Service programs. We believe that a skilled workforce is essential to our nation's economic security and these proposed funding cuts will seriously undermine our ability to compete in the global economy.

WIA is a business-led system that provides skills training for a demand-driven economy – providing workers with the skills that employers need. This need for skilled workers will only increase as global competition continues to intensify. Our nation's employment and training programs are on the front lines, equipping employers with desperately-needed skilled workers. In fact, over 13 million workers this year - more than one in ten workers nationally - will seek assistance from our nation's employment and training programs.

However, the Administration's Fiscal Year 2008 budget does not reflect the importance of investing in employment and training programs. It calls for cutting \$1 billion from WIA and employment service programs. WIA formula programs would be cut by \$639 million, with another \$335 million rescission of current year formula funding. If approved, these cuts may force One Stop Career Centers around the nation to close their doors, and our ability to train our most valuable economic resource, our workers, will be greatly diminished.

We recognize that tough choices will need to be made this fiscal year in this difficult funding environment. However, we believe it is extremely important to our economic strength to invest in a skilled workforce to protect America's economic future. The strong bi-partisan congressional support for Workforce Investment Act programs reflects accurately this commitment to ensure our nation's workers and employers have access to critical workforce services.

We strongly urge you to restore funding for employment and training programs to at least Fiscal Year 2005 levels in the Fiscal Year 2008 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations bill.

Sincerely,