



June 6, 2012

The Honorable John Kline
Chairman
Committee on Education & Workforce
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable George Miller
Ranking Member
Committee on Education & Workforce
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Kline and Ranking Member Miller:

On behalf of Associated Builders and Contractors (ABC), a national association with 74 chapters representing 22,000 merit shop construction and construction-related firms, I am writing in regard to the mark up of the *Workforce Investment Improvement Act of 2012* (H.R. 4297). ABC supports this legislation because it will strengthen our nation's workforce development system by creating a more streamlined approach that focuses on businesses' hiring and training needs, which will increase employment opportunities.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the number of wage and salary jobs in the construction industry is expected to grow 19 percent through 2018, while all industries combined are expected to grow by 11 percent. ABC believes that one of the keys to attracting new workers and retaining current craft professionals is flexible training programs.

Specifically, H.R. 4297 will enable small businesses, which create more than 65 percent of all new jobs in America, to continue developing training programs and career opportunities. By serving their communities through the local workforce investment boards that would be enhanced by this legislation, business leaders can become more involved in career development programs and serve as an authority on training, skills and job opportunities in their communities.

Additionally, this legislation would eliminate current language in the Green Jobs Act included in the Workforce Investment Act. The current statutory language allows these training grants to be accessed by firms associated with a labor union, effectively barring contractors with employees that chose not to be associated with union training providers from accessing federal training dollars funded by their own taxes. This is grossly unfair to the 86 percent of employees in the construction industry who chose not to be affiliated with a labor organization.

We appreciate your attention to this important matter, and urge immediate passage of the *Workforce Investment Improvement Act of 2012*.

Sincerely,

Geoffrey Burr
Vice President, Federal Affairs