



March 05, 2013

The Honorable John Kline Chairman,
Committee on Education and the Workforce
U.S. House of Representatives
2181 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington DC 20515-6100

Dear Chairman Kline:

Rebuilding America's Middle Class (RAMC) is a coalition of state and individual community college systems from across the country who share the common belief that community colleges are one of America's primary solutions to building a strong, more competitive workforce and therefore, a strong middle class.

RAMC is pleased the Committee on Education and the Workforce is moving ahead with legislation, H.R. 803, the "Supporting Knowledge and Investing in Lifelong Skills (SKILLS) Act", introduced by Chairwoman Foxx, to reauthorize the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) for the first time in 13 years. Community colleges are an integral component of the WIA system, and are crucial to ensuring that each and every individual has the opportunity to receive the education and skills necessary to get and keep a good job. RAMC believes that now is the time to pass this long-overdue reauthorization in order to update and modernize our current federal workforce system.

We believe this legislation takes a critical step toward streamlining and improving the current myriad of federal employment and training programs. We are particularly supportive of provisions that:

- Place a renewed emphasis on job training by requiring minimum amounts of funding to be targeted toward training;
- Restructure the cumbersome current sequence of services that does not prioritize training and instead will ensure individuals have the opportunity to receive training immediately;
- Allow local boards to contract directly with community colleges for the provision of training designed to serve large groups of individuals;

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- Allow states to streamline the eligibility of training providers, including community colleges; and
- Promote the development of educational pathways from high school through postsecondary education with more “on and off” ramps so students and transitioning workers can gain interim credentials with real value in the labor market.

As you move ahead with this important legislation, we look forward to working with you and other Members of the Committee to further improve the bill's focus on devoting additional resources to training, greater efficiency and effectiveness in the use of WIA funding and enhancing capacity of community colleges as training providers.

As the legislative process continues, we urge the Committee to place additional focus on capacity and other improvements that would ensure the next generation of America's workforce investment system has the resources, flexibility, and accountability to meet the needs of our nation's employers as well as the millions of Americans who desperately need additional skills to succeed in today's economy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Joe D. May". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "J" and "M".

Joe May
Board Chair, Rebuilding America's Middle Class (RAMC)
President, Louisiana Community & Technical College System

CC: Representative Virginia Foxx, Chairwoman, Subcommittee on Higher Education and Workforce Training, House Education and the Workforce Committee