

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 17, 2017

President Donald Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue N.W.
Washington, DC 20500

President Trump:

As Members of the New Democrat Coalition who have long-focused on job growth and workforce development, we appreciate your interest in apprenticeships and other training programs. However, we are concerned by your proposed cuts to federal workforce development initiatives in the FY2018 budget. We value results over rhetoric. These budget cuts are incongruent with the promise you made to the American people.

Ensuring American workers have the skills and training needed to advance in the modern economy is a priority we share. As technology has advanced, workforce needs have changed. A report from the Center on Education and the Workforce at Georgetown University shows that by 2020, 65 percent of all jobs in the US economy will require postsecondary education and training beyond high school. In 1973, that was reversed: those with postsecondary education only accounted for 28 percent of the workforce. In manufacturing, construction, and other critical industries, our nation's growing skills gap damages the competitive position of many employers. A report commissioned by the Manufacturing Institute estimates that nearly 3.5 million manufacturing jobs will open over the next decade, yet 2 million will go unfilled due to a shortage of talent. This shift has left, and will continue to leave, American workers behind without strategic investments in workforce development and skills training programs.

Despite its limited details, we recognize the merits of certain aspects of your apprenticeship plan. Yet diminishing federal investments in workforce training is a faulty foundation for success. Your budget cuts over \$1 billion in grants designed to help states meet talent needs and foster economic growth. Career and Technical Education grants, which support our high schools and community colleges, will be cut by 15 percent. Job training and placement programs authorized under the bipartisan Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) would be decreased by 40 percent under your proposal. Many of these initiatives are still being implemented, and funding cuts could derail their progress toward successful outcomes.

Our nation's workforce development initiatives aim not only to improve our competitiveness in the long-term, but provide services to workers in need of new employment. Federal funding is crucial to ensuring that successful initiatives continue to produce results for workers across the country. In Illinois, nearly nine in ten participants of the Dislocated Worker Program gained and retained employment within a year of exiting the program. The services provided by this program – career counseling, job placement assistance, and occupational skills

training – can make all the difference to employees and prospective employers. In 2016, Alabama’s WIOA-funded career centers met all 13 goals related to veteran unemployment set by the U.S. Department of Labor for the first time and the veteran unemployment rate decreased from 5.6 percent to 3.1 percent by the end of the year. A study by the Fordham Institute released last year found that students in Arkansas who participated in a concentrated CTE program were more likely to graduate high school. While we acknowledge the need to work together to continue improving outcomes, your approach disregards current progress, and could jeopardize our ability to keep pace with growing industries and ultimately stifle our economic potential.

As our economy continues to change and people find work in new ways, we must create more apprenticeship opportunities that will help workers get the skills they need. We should expand innovative initiatives that align education and workforce needs by facilitating partnerships between local businesses, workforce intermediary partnerships, and educational institutions like community colleges. We should modernize the apprenticeship certification process to allow for the creation of new, high-quality programs that offer the opportunity for economic growth and access to good jobs for underemployed, unemployed, and displaced Americans. However, we are concerned with efforts that could dramatically scale back or remove federal oversight from apprenticeship programs, especially those that receive federal funding. We believe students and taxpayers deserve standards of quality assurance.

We are ready and willing to work with you to create innovative job training programs and improve our existing workforce development efforts, but we are concerned that any positive outcomes from your new initiative would be overshadowed by the negative impacts of your cuts to existing programs and lack of consumer protections. With people across our country struggling to provide for their families, new initiatives should complement—not compete with—proven job training and placement assistance.

Sincerely,



Cheri Bustos
Member of Congress



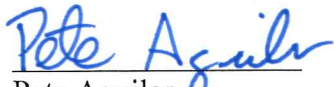
Terri Sewell
Member of Congress




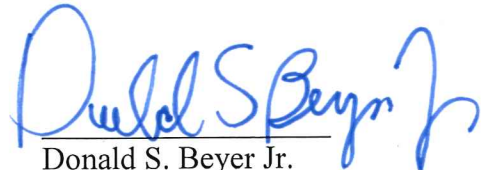
Ann McLane Kuster
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Donald Norcross
Member of Congress

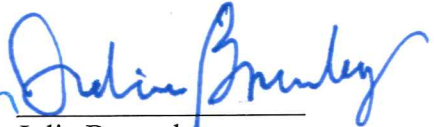

Pete Aguilar
Member of Congress


Ami Bera
Member of Congress

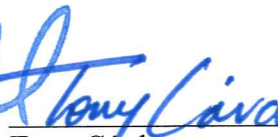

Donald S. Beyer Jr.
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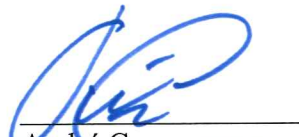

Lisa Blunt Rochester
Member of Congress

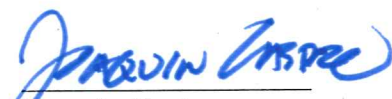

Anthony G. Brown
Member of Congress

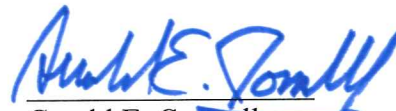

Julia Brownley
Member of Congress

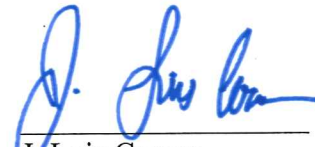

Salud O. Carbajal
Member of Congress



Tony Cardenas
Member of Congress


André Carson
Member of Congress



Joaquin Castro
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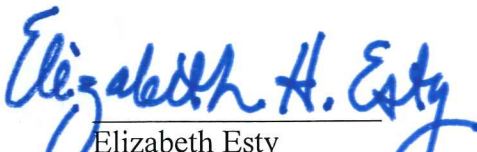

Gerald E. Connolly
Member of Congress



J. Luis Correa
Member of Congress

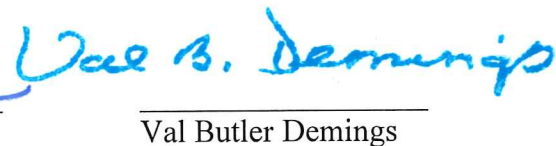

Jim Costa
Member of Congress


Charlie Crist
Member of Congress

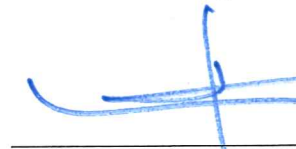

John K. Delaney
Member of Congress

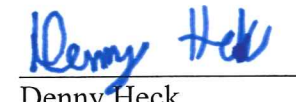

Elizabeth Esty
Member of Congress



Suzan DelBene
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Val Butler Demings
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Bill Foster
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Colleen Hanabusa
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Denny Heck
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Jim Himes
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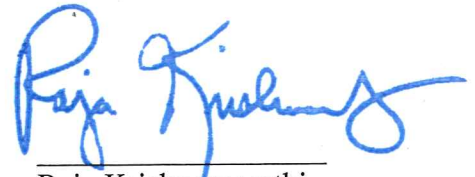

Ruben J. Kihuen
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Derek Kilmer
Member of Congress



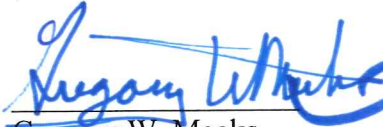
Ron Kind
Member of Congress



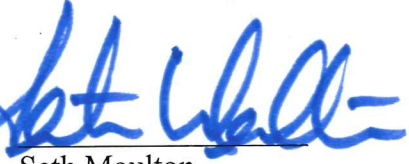
Raja Krishnamoorthi
Member of Congress



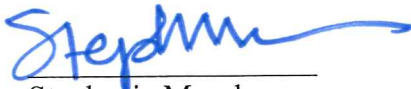
Rick Larsen
Member of Congress



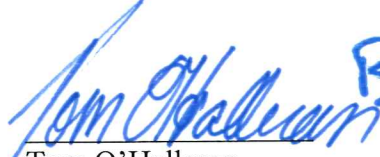
Gregory W. Meeks
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Seth Moulton
Member of Congress




Stephanie Murphy
Member of Congress



Tom O'Halleran
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Beto O'Rourke
Member of Congress



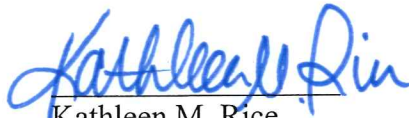
Scott H. Peters
Member of Congress



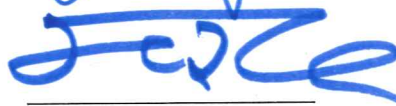
Jared Polis
Member of Congress



Mike Quigley
Member of Congress



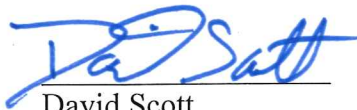
Kathleen M. Rice
Member of Congress



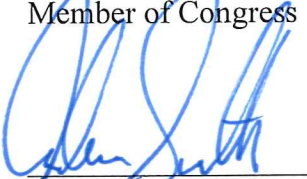
Cedric L. Richmond
Member of Congress



Bradley S. Schneider
Member of Congress



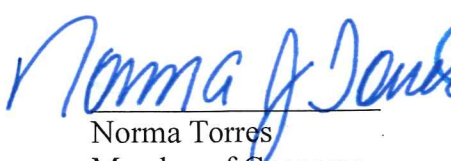
David Scott
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Adam Smith
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Darren Soto
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Norma Torres
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Juan Vargas
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