

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 3, 2008

The Honorable Tom Harkin
Chairman
Subcommittee on Labor,
Health and Human Services, and Education
Senate Appropriations Committee
131 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Arlen Specter
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor,
Health and Human Services, and Education
Senate Appropriations Committee
156 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Harkin and Ranking Member Specter:

We write to voice our continued support for the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) and Employment Service programs and request that funding for these essential career development efforts be restored in the fiscal year 2009 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations bill.

Strong investments in employment and training programs are needed to bolster American competitiveness amidst troubling indicators in the economy. Last month, the Department of Labor reported a loss of 17,000 jobs in January, the first such decline in four years. Today, more than 7.6 million Americans are currently unemployed, while another 6 million are marginally attached to the workforce.

This year, over 14 million workers, or one in ten workers nationally, will seek assistance from WIA and Employment Services. The training provided through these programs give individuals the advanced skills required to meet the evolving needs of employers, who increasingly recognize the interdependent nature of workforce development and economic success.

A period of economic slowdown is not the time to cut off support for our workforce; it is the time to invest. However, the Administration's budget request would reduce WIA funding by \$484 million in addition to a wholesale elimination of Employment Services. If implemented, these cuts will effectively shutter One Stop Career Centers across the country and significantly hamper state and local efforts to further develop the individuals who make up our most valued economic resource.

These cuts would undermine workforce preparedness and long-term economic growth. Despite a difficult fiscal environment, we hope you will prioritize the federal programming that we have long depended on to protect our economic security.

We urge that funding for WIA and Employment Service programs be restored in fiscal year 2009, along with appropriate increases to match rising costs.

Sincerely,





Edward M Kennedy

Hillary Rodham Clinton

Jon Lick

Art Stiles

Frank R. Lautenberg

Patrick Leahy

Robert Menendez

Bob Casey, Jr.

Chris Dodd

John F. Kerry

John Barrasso

Carl Levin

Dominick Anunzio

Jim Webb

John Tester

Ken Salazar

Josh Reed

Mary Landrieu

Bill Nelson

My Barnes

Norm Feigold

Burt

Ron Wyden

Pat Sanders

Blanch L. Lincoln

Noam Coleman

Chuck Schumer

Herb Kohl

Amy Klobuchar

Dick Durbin

Bob Zoya

Janet Healy

Rebecca Stabenow

Dianne Feinstein

Jay Byrnes

Robert A. Neuhoff