

December 11, 2017

The Honorable Roy Blunt  
Chair  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and  
Human Services, Education and  
Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and  
Human Services, Education and  
Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Blunt and Ranking Member Murray,

As organizations that support the creation of employment and training opportunities for out-of-school youth, we strongly encourage you to ensure the WIOA Youth formula program funding is left intact in the coming supplemental appropriations bill, and oppose any new transfer authorities.

We understand the House Appropriations Committee is currently considering language in the supplemental appropriations bill that would allow communities in areas affected by recent disasters to transfer 100 percent of WIOA Youth dollars from program years 2016 and 2017 to serve other populations. Our organizations share your concern about workers who were left unemployed as a result of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria this year. We represent youth who live in these communities and we know the challenges that they and their families face in the wake of the massive destruction caused by these storms. We believe that the Committee has a responsibility to deliver new and additional funding to help those most affected by disasters, through a supplemental disaster assistance package. This funding should not be reprogrammed from the WIOA Youth formula program. The WIOA statute already allows local areas to authority to transfer 100 percent of its Title I adult and dislocated formula funding to respond to employment challenges facing adults.

The bottom line is that we know how to prepare young adults for success at work and economic self-sufficiency, but resources are already dwarfed by the need. We must expand opportunities, not divert scarce resources. Across the United States, more than 4.9 million 16- to 24-year-olds have been separated from pathways to productive adulthood. These “opportunity youth” represent untapped potential for employers, communities and our economy. All young people deserve an opportunity to access a good education and pathways to productive adulthood, despite race, gender, where they live or where they start in life. Opportunity youth hold tremendous potential if we make the choice to invest in them. Investing \$30,000 in helping a young person reconnect to a pathway to productive adulthood saves taxpayers more than \$65,000, and generates an estimated \$105,000 in new tax revenue over the course of his or her career.

Each year nearly 200,000 young people now receive services through nationwide WIOA Youth Program formula funding. During the most recent program year for which national data is available, between April, 2015 and March, 2016, 94,925 youth exited the WIOA program, with 70.1 percent placed in employment (57 percent) or education (13.2); 68.9 percent obtained a secondary school diploma (42.5 percent), GED or its equivalent (9.4 percent), or certificate or

postsecondary degree (17 percent). Furthermore, a 2011 state-level evaluation of workforce programs documented that federally funded workforce services increased employment and earnings for adults, dislocated workers and youth, with adults and youth served having higher employment rates and higher earnings than non-participants three quarters following participation.

At the system level, WIOA Youth services increasingly reflect research-based practices, and several studies have documented the effectiveness of local boards and partners in ramping up their service to out-of-school young adults, as mandated by Congress in WIOA.

Again, we share your concerns about communities affected by devastating disasters in 2017, and we will support any efforts the Committee makes to provide additional emergency funding to respond to the employment and training needs of those affected. However, we strongly discourage any new provisions that allow funding to be transferred from the WIOA youth program to serve other populations.

As always, we greatly appreciate your consideration of our views, and thank you for your previous support.

Sincerely,

Arizona Center for Youth Resources  
Aspen Institute's Forum for Community Solutions  
Augustus F. Hawkins Foundation  
Campaign for Youth  
Campaign for Youth Justice  
Center for Law and Social Policy  
City of Albany, New York  
Coalition for Juvenile Justice  
Communities Collaborating to Reconnect Youth Network  
Forum for Youth Investment  
Gateway to College National Network  
Goodwill Industries International, Inc.  
Institute for Educational Leadership  
JobsFirstNYC  
Middle Tennessee Workforce Development Board  
National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity (NAPE)  
National Center for Learning Disabilities  
National Job Corps Association  
National Juvenile Justice Network  
National Network for Youth  
National Skills Coalition  
National Youth Employment Coalition  
Our Piece of the Pie, Inc.  
Philadelphia Youth Network  
Public Allies, Inc.

Reconnecting Youth Campaign  
Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law  
See Forever Foundation  
Service Year Alliance  
SparkAction  
Strategies for Youth  
United States Workforce Association  
United Way Worldwide  
Year Up  
Youth Advocate Programs  
YouthBuild USA