



Dear Senator:

We write to you as business leaders who are members of Baltimore City's Workforce Investment Board. We strongly urge you to **restore the Workforce Investment Act funds** that the House slashed in its FY 2011 Continuing Resolution. This legislation provides for the elimination of all funding, over \$3.6 billion, for the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) in Program Year 2011 and a \$175 million rescission of prior year funds.

Beginning in July 1 of this year, these cuts would zero out all new funding for state and local programs under WIA—programs that provide vital services for the nation's unemployed, under-employed and for America's businesses as they try to rebound from the recession. All One-Stop Career Centers will have to close their doors. Simply put, this **total elimination of funding for WIA would result in the end of the nation's employment and training system** during one of the worst economic downturns in American history.

The business-led Workforce Investment System, funded through the Workforce Investment Act, is **essential to addressing the re-employment and retraining needs** of the millions of American workers displaced by this economic crisis. Additionally, WIA is a necessity in assisting young people unable to enter the labor market due to the pronounced lack of available youth employment opportunities. Nationally, over the past year, the WIA-funded workforce investment system has provided training, employment, and support services to more than 8,000,000 jobseekers, more than half of whom found jobs as a result. Although this was well below the WIA system's usual 80 to 85 percent placement rate, the system had to contend with more than four jobseekers for every vacancy, during a time of record high unemployment. Local WIA agencies also placed many other people in education and training programs that will prepare them for good new jobs.

Of equal importance are the **Workforce Investment services that aid local businesses** and support regional economic development efforts. WIA-funded workforce systems are critical partners in regional economic development efforts—from directly supporting new business recruitment by offering access to skilled workers and employment and training incentives, to saving local businesses money as they begin to rehire, helping them avert layoffs through skills upgrading, and helping workers search for jobs when their employers close or downsize. These partnerships with employers and economic development help businesses survive and contribute to regional economic growth and prosperity. Now is no time to take away these vital services that promote economic recovery and competitiveness.

Of course we recognize that Congress is facing the enormous deficit reduction challenges, but the best deficit reduction strategy is a growing economy in which people leave unemployment and return to work. **The Workforce Investment Act is a sound investment in America's future.** Shutting down the nation's employment and training system would guarantee unprecedented hardship for workers, jobseekers, and businesses.

Sincerely,

[signature]

Name