

Dec 20, 2023

The Honorable Virginia Foxx
Chairwoman
Committee on Education & the Workforce
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Bobby Scott
Ranking Member
Committee on Education & the Workforce
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair Foxx and Ranking Member Scott:

On behalf of Per Scholas, I am writing to express our support for A Stronger Workforce for America Act (H.R. 6655). We are thrilled that this bipartisan effort would reinvigorate our national workforce system with improvements that better align workforce development providers, employers, and workforce boards with the needs of America's workers.

Per Scholas offers high-impact technology skills development programs in 22 U.S. cities. We have assisted more than 20,000 adult learners, helping them build life-changing skills and careers in an industry where women, people of color, and workers without a college degree are historically underrepresented. Our twice-evaluated model yields positive economic outcomes for our learners long past graduation, including a 50% reduction of reliance on public benefits and increasing earnings by 3x of their pre-enrollment wages.

We appreciate that the bill integrates many of our recommendations around performance and accountability, including enhancements that will:

- Reduce barriers for workforce development providers and participants, by allowing Eligible Training Providers to accept participants while their eligibility determination is still being reviewed by the local workforce board. This provision is critically important to cohort-based providers, as it allows participants to begin their skills development when a program commences, instead of when they receive their ITAs. It also greatly improves the ability of providers to obtain reimbursement for services delivered.
- Require states to establish standards for Eligible Training Providers that clearly link to labor market outcomes, and require that local areas must spend 50% of WIOA funds on skills development. This places a strong emphasis on evidence-based approaches, and better prioritizes career pathways for individuals that enroll in skills development programs.
- Encourage innovation by allowing states to use up to 20% of their funds through Critical Industry Skills initiatives. This will reduce red tape for states and workforce development providers to build effective partnerships through a competitive grants process.
- Streamline the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) and authorize conditional eligibility for workforce development providers that have demonstrated impact. This provision creates more efficiency in the ETPL process and encourages states to reduce the burden on multi-state providers.



- Provide opportunities for expanded pay-for-performance contracting, including authorizing Governors to use incentives for boards to implement such contracts, which yield long-term equitable outcomes for communities.

We applaud the Committee for its efforts to make significant improvements to WIOA in this reauthorization bill. We look forward to working with you to continue to make improvements to the bill as it moves forward.

Sincerely,

Plinio Ayala
President & CEO,
Per Scholas