



December 3, 2024

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Majority Leader
US Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Michael Johnson
Speaker
US House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
US Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
Minority Leader
US House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

RE: A Stronger Workforce for America Act

Dear Leader Schumer, Speaker Johnson, Senator McConnell, and Representative Jeffries:

On behalf of a group of national membership, policy, and advocacy organizations aligned on the need to strengthen the nation's data infrastructure, we write to express our strong support for several aspects of the recently released bipartisan, bicameral *A Stronger Workforce for America Act*. We believe the provisions identified here would dramatically improve the generation of and access to quality workforce data and applaud your Committees for prioritizing them as part of the broader Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) reauthorization process. We also strongly urge you to pass this bill this year—before the end of the 118th Congress—to ensure the sensible improvements to the workforce data ecosystem can be implemented as soon as possible.

Better workforce data empowers individuals to more easily identify the education and career pathways that will help them secure family-sustaining employment; supports employers in understanding the best sources of prospective talent to meet their needs; and helps policymakers develop and calibrate policies aimed at supporting our nation's most vulnerable populations and maximizing the impact of public investments.

Put simply, data is an essential ingredient to building and sustaining a strong and responsive public workforce system.

The need for more transparent, accurate, actionable, and secure information has never been greater as the needs of critical stakeholders like governors, workforce development boards, and policymakers tasked with implementing WIOA continue to evolve. Quality data is crucial to making this vision for the future a reality and ensuring that each of these stakeholders has the information they need to be successful. We were therefore pleased to note that the final legislation developed by your Committees contains the following critical elements:

- **Streamlining Data Access and Reporting**: Recognizes the important role statewide longitudinal data systems (SLDSs) play in ensuring quality, accessible data. We applaud the inclusion of SLDSs

and their subsequent use throughout the draft. Leveraging existing state data infrastructure like SLDSs will not only help connect workforce development systems with other parts of the education continuum, but it will also allow for higher quality, timelier, and less burdensome data generation. Clarifying that SLDSs can be used to match records and access various sources of workforce data can also help to ensure that this information is used securely and in accordance with applicable federal and state privacy laws as envisioned by the legislation.

- **Codifying Workforce Data Quality Initiative (WDQI)**: Codifies the Workforce Data Quality Initiative (WDQI) and increases the program’s authorization level to support the generation of accurate and timely workforce data that can be used in SLDSs and by other workforce stakeholders and entities. These changes would enable states to develop tools and resources that can strengthen program quality, expand state capacity to produce and evaluate evidence for decisionmaking, meet performance reporting requirements, protect privacy, and improve transparency.
- **Promoting Data Transparency and Interoperability**: Prioritizes and expands the adoption and use of linked, open, and interoperable data related to credentials, skills, and other pertinent workforce data to inform a wide variety of reporting and accountability processes to ensure that data generated within the workforce system is high-quality, transparent, and useable by a variety of actors. We were especially encouraged to note the report on data interoperability across all data collections and related reporting authorized in this legislation. We strongly believe that high-quality, structured data is critical—not only to further empower stakeholders in the public workforce system, but also as a key strategy to reduce existing reporting obligations as technological innovations continue to move forward.
- **Improving Wage Record Access**: Ensures workforce system access to the National Directory of New Hires (NDNH) for fiscal and management accountability purposes, including allowing the governor to designate an agency to facilitate data matching, validation, and security. These changes would greatly improve the timeliness and accuracy of subsequent reporting required under the legislation. In addition, the legislation makes significant improvements in other areas of current law to ensure that programs and initiatives make greater and more intentional use of other sources of wage record data for similar purposes.
- **Leveraging Labor Market Information**: Promotes the use of labor market data and related information to ensure that workforce programs and initiatives are responsive to the actual and evolving needs of youth and young adults, learners, workers, and employers. We are especially supportive of the changes proposed for the public workforce and labor market information system which would expand the generation of real-time labor market information and ensure that this information is timely and user-friendly. These changes are crucial at this moment in time when the economy is undergoing a period of dramatic transition.
- **Encouraging Evidence-Based Interventions**: Introduces improvements to the publicly funded workforce system to increase the extent to which programs, services, and initiatives are supported and informed by data, research, and evidence as well as encourages continued learning—changes to current law that set the stage for improving the efficacy and impact of workforce development programs.

Thank you for your commitment and hard work in crafting a thoughtful, bipartisan bicameral approach to WIOA reauthorization. We are particularly appreciative of your robust focus on quality workforce



data and its related infrastructure, use, and privacy. Again, we urge you to work together to pass this bill during the 118th Congress. Should you have questions for us or would like to discuss these ideas further, please contact the Data Quality Campaign's Vice President, Federal Policy Kate Tromble at ktromble@dataqualitycampaign.org.

Sincerely,

Advance CTE	National Indian Education Association
Alamance Achieves	National Skills Coalition
Aligned Impact Muscatine County	National Youth Employment Coalition
All4Ed	New America Higher Education Team
America Forward	Oakland Promise
Building Our Future-Kenosha, WI	Opportunity@Work
Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO)	Per Scholas
Commit Partnership - Texas	REDF
Credential Engine	Results for America
Data Foundation	RiseUp
Data Quality Campaign	Rocky Mountain Partnership
E3 Alliance	Seeding Success
Education Partnerships Coalition of Minnesota (EPC)	Social Finance
Excelencia in Education	StriveTogether
Foundation for Tacoma Students	Summit Education Initiative
Higher Expectations for Racine County	The Boston Opportunity Agenda
Institute for Higher Education Policy (IHEP)	The Colorado Equitable Economic Mobility Initiative (CEEMI)
Jobs for the Future	Toledo Tomorrow
Knowledge Alliance	UnidosUS
Marin Promise Partnership	United Way North Central New Mexico
Mission Economic Development Agency	Year Up
National College Attainment Network	

Cc: Senate Health Education Labor and Pensions Chair Sanders, Ranking Member Cassidy
House Education and the Workforce Chair Virginia Foxx, Ranking Member Scott