



DOWNERS GROVE AREA
Chamber of Commerce & Industry

September 19, 2011

The Honorable Tom Harkin
Chairman
HELP Committee
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chair, Subcommittee on
Employment and Workplace Safety
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Michael Enzi
Ranking Member
HELP Committee
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Johnny Isakson
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on
Employment and Workplace Safety
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Harkin, Enzi, Murray, and Isakson:

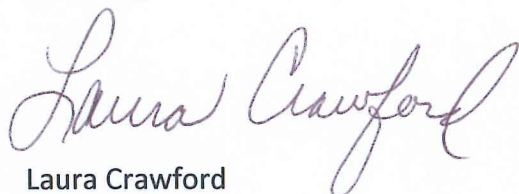
On behalf of the Board of Directors and the 680 Members of the Downers Grove Area Chamber of Commerce & Industry, I am writing to express our strong support of the bipartisan effort of the HELP Committee to reauthorize the Workforce Investment Act (WIA). This Chamber supports the bill and look forward to working with the Committee to make further improvements as it moves through the legislative process.

There has been a dramatic increase in demand for these programs in recent years, and the system has responded successfully; programs under the Workforce Investment Act serve over nine million individuals and hundreds of thousands of employers across the country. The system places between 50 to 90% of its clients in employment and helps between 80 to 90 percent retain their new jobs. This is extraordinary performance in spite of great challenges individuals have faced in the job market during the recession and continuing slow recovery.

Regions that prosper have developed strong partnerships and collaboration. As a regional Chamber of Commerce representing 680 American businesses, we are committed to robust economies anchored by healthy businesses which create and sustain good jobs. A skilled and competitive workforce is critical for our businesses and for our community. State and local employer-led workforce investment boards are a valued partner. It is vital that our local workforce investment boards remain demand-driven, utilizing employer input and labor market data to determine local training investment decisions to address the needs and challenges of our business members.

The Senate Discussion Draft retains this most successful and critical element of business-led, business chaired, local workforce investment boards. We are confident that re-authorization will continue to align resources and produce even more effective and efficient workforce development systems. We urge you to expeditiously re-authorize the Workforce Investment Act which we see as an essential tool in our nation's economic recovery.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Laura Crawford". The signature is written in a dark ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Laura Crawford
President & CEO

cc: Board of Directors