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March 21, 2017

Congressman Bobby Scott
Ranking Member
Committee on Education and the Workforce
U.S. House of Representatives
1201 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Scott:

On behalf of the nation's mayors, I write to express our strong support for the Opening Doors for Youth (ODFY) Act of 2017. With nearly 5 million young people, ages 16-24, out of school and work, at-risk and opportunity youth often lack a path to the entry-level jobs that help keep them connected to school and help them develop the early work experiences and work readiness skills needed to successfully transition into the labor market.

The Opening Doors for Youth Act of 2017 (ODYP) will provide at-risk and disconnected youth with subsidized summer and year-round employment opportunities that will greatly assist cities in improving high school graduation and youth employment rates – which will, in turn, positively impact the individual youth, local communities and overall economy.

We all know that a well-prepared youth labor market is critical to meet the nation's future workforce demands in a 21st Century global economy, and that connecting youth to career and skill paths is crucial to ensuring their future contribution as members of the mainstream labor force. Yet, Congress is not doing all that it can to support and invest in opportunity youth. The ODFY Act will expand opportunities for our nation's most vulnerable youth by putting more than 1 million young people to work and supporting community efforts to keep youth connected to school and training.

Mayors understand the value and importance of strategic investments to help bridge the gap between out of work, opportunity youth and businesses. This legislation will support city leader's continued work to address the challenges faced by disconnected, at-risk young people across the country.

We appreciate your continued support for the nation's cities and for the nation's youth, and we look forward to working with you to ensure the passage of the Opening Doors for Youth Act of 2017.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Cochran". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Tom Cochran
CEO and Executive Director