



April 10, 2012

The Honorable John Kline
Chairman, Committee on Education and the Workforce
U.S. House of Representatives
2181 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Virginia Foxx
Chairwoman, Subcommittee on Higher Education & Workforce Training
Committee on Education and the Workforce
U.S. House of Representatives
2181 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Kline and Chairwoman Foxx:

We are writing on behalf of the businesses, nonprofits, community colleges, and staff that make up the **National Job Corps Association to express our opposition to** the provision within H.R. 4297 – the *Workforce Investment Improvement Act* that would essentially end our nation’s single most effective career preparation program for at-risk youth by consolidating it into a block grant.

While we are not opposed to the efforts of the bill as a whole to streamline the nation’s workforce programs to increase efficiencies and accountability, block-granting the Job Corps program is a counterproductive proposal. At a time when Congress is focused on increasing the cost-effectiveness of government, this will make Job Corps more costly and less effective. It is our fervent hope that this specific provision will be removed from this bill.

Job Corps Works

Over 50 years, Job Corps has honed a unique model that has proven successful. Job Corps’ model is a public-private partnership that utilizes performance-based competition among private operators to yield the highest return on investment for taxpayers and the best possible outcomes for students. It is the only job training program that employs this market-based model and it is also the nation’s most effective training program for the population it serves. These two facts are directly correlated.

The Job Corps model cannot function efficiently or effectively as a state-based program. The program’s success relies heavily on interstate enrollments, placements, and competition. A state-based program would also inject more government administration into the program inefficiently shifting more resources to the public side of Job Corps’ public-private partnership.

Block-Granting Job Corps Will Increase Spending on Government Administration

Turning Job Corps’ funding and administration over to the states would sacrifice efficiencies of scale and necessitate the creation of fifty new state bureaucracies to manage procurements and oversight. **For example, instead of the six contracting officers that currently manage Job Corps procurements, there would need to be 50 in the state bureaucracies – more than eight times as**



many! Block-granting Job Corps would unnecessarily increase spending on government administration by tens of millions of dollars, at the expense of taxpayers and the young Americans Job Corps serves.

Block-granting would also increase the program's operational costs. Job Corps currently capitalizes on efficiencies of scale to reduce operating costs, including expenditures on enrollment and placement services, information technology services, energy, supplies, technical assistance, and architectural design services for Job Corps facilities. All of these costs would increase in a state-administered program, costing taxpayers millions of dollars while delivering fewer services to students.

Block-Granting Job Corps Will Reduce Accountability and Student Outcomes

Job Corps' national recruitment and placement system is a foundation of the program's success. It allows eligible youth to enroll in the closest center that offers the trade they are interested in and allows employers in every region of the country to attract qualified skilled workers regardless of their location. Switching to a fractured state system would limit youth to enrolling in the center(s) in their state regardless of whether the center(s) offer trades that interest them. This would unquestionably have a negative impact on enrollments and graduation rates, as these youth, the majority of whom have dropped out of school before, become disinterested and frustrated. Further, placing students only with employers in their state would limit employers' access to qualified workers and lessen the likelihood of graduates being hired.

Further, Job Corps' federally administered performance management and information system allows the performance of operators to be compared and ranked nationally which shapes procurement decisions. This system fosters accountability and competition that results in innovation and better student outcomes. In a state-administered system, each state would consider a Job Corps center's effectiveness in a vacuum. Student outcomes would fall as operators are no longer compelled to improve by competition with their peers.

Block-granting Job Corps is not in the best interests of taxpayers or the disadvantaged youth Job Corps is intended to serve and has been opposed by Republicans and Democrats alike over several decades. We strongly urge the subcommittee to amend H.R. 4297 by removing the provision that would block-grant Job Corps.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Richard F. Schubert in black ink.

Richard F. Schubert
Chair

Handwritten signature of LaVera L. Leonard in black ink.

LaVera L. Leonard
President

Cc: Ranking Member George Miller, Committee on Education and the Workforce
Ranking Member Rubén Hinojosa, Subcommittee on Higher Education & Workforce Training