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February 14, 2013

The Honorable George Miller
Ranking Member
Committee on Education and the Workforce
2101 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Ranking Member Miller,

I write on behalf of The Corps Network (TCN) to express our support for the Workforce Investment Act of 2013, which would reauthorize the Workforce Investment Act (WIA). We appreciate your leadership on this important issue and look forward to working with you and bipartisan members of the House Education and the Workforce Committee to improve upon our nation's workforce and economic development systems.

The Corps Network is the membership association of the nation's 150 Youth Service and Conservation Corps. Descended from the Depression-era Civilian Conservation Corps, today's Corps are comprehensive youth development programs that provide job training, academic programming, leadership skills, and additional support through a strategy of public service that improves our communities and our environment. Corps currently operate in all 50 states and DC.

Each year Corps enroll over 30,000 Corpsmembers ages 16-25 and leverage an additional 289,000 community volunteer partners to generate 13.5 million total hours of service. For the last four decades, Corps have done important and measurable conservation, construction, disaster recovery, energy efficiency, and other kinds of human service projects, while educating and providing job skills to almost one million young people – many of them from low income and minority communities.

We are particularly pleased the Workforce Investment Act of 2013 recognizes the important role Corps play in educating and training youth, particularly disconnected youth. Over the course of the last four decades, Corps across the country have helped hundreds of thousands of youth enter the workforce and gain the skills and confidence needed to compete in the 21st Century. Corps offer a proven model for success as an on-ramp to the workforce and further education, and hope to expand our collaboration and integration into the workforce development system in our local communities through your legislation.

Youth unemployment is a problem that threatens the economic stability of families and communities. Since the economy collapsed, more than 6 million young adults are considered "disconnected," meaning they are neither working nor in school. Corps are a critical and proven

part of the training and education infrastructure for these disconnected youth. With youth unemployment at 17 percent (29 percent for African-Americans and 19 percent for Latinos), Corps can help address the youth unemployment problem while also helping to educate and create the workforce of the future.

Therefore, we also applaud your decision not to consolidate Youth Activities funding into an adult-focused Workforce Investment Fund. We believe that there must be a Youth Activities funding stream because in our experience whenever youth and adults are included in the same stream, adults receive more services than the youth. This is a particularly important point as youth have been struggling to recover from the recession at the same pace as adults. We also applaud your push to make it easier to for proven organizations to work with the local workforce system and pursue further innovative strategies.

Youth unemployment continues to remain unacceptably high. Disadvantaged and out-of school youth in particular have limited access to job training and education resources to assist them in finding and keeping jobs and pursuing a high school diploma, GED, or college enrollment. We hope that you, and your colleagues, will proceed on a bipartisan basis to reauthorize the Workforce Investment Act, and in the process further strengthen the provisions that link service and conservation corps more closely to the workforce and education system and expand the ability of corps to serve disconnected youth effectively as we have been doing for decades.

We are again happy to offer our support for Workforce Investment Act of 2013 and look forward to working with you and members of the Education and the Workforce Committee to achieve the goal of strengthening our workforce and economic development system.

Sincerely,



Mary Ellen Ardouny
President and CEO