



March 5, 2013

The Honorable John P. Kline, Chairman
House Education and the Workforce Committee
2181 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable George Miller, Ranking Minority Member
House Education and the Workforce Committee
2181 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Kline and Ranking Minority Member Miller:

On behalf of the 1.2 million active and retired members of the United Steelworkers union (USW), **I urge you to oppose HR 803, the "Supporting Knowledge and Investing in Lifelong Skills Act" or the "SKILLS Act"**. As currently drafted, the legislation contains provisions which will adversely impact the unemployed, eliminate labor's voice to improve training and significantly damage dislocated worker programs.

The SKILLS act would eliminate the Wagner-Peyser program which will undermine the existing Unemployment Insurance (UI) system. The Wagner-Peyser staff ensures UI recipients meet eligibility requirements and actively seek work. The loss of accountability and state control that would result from the SKILLS Act means the unemployed will remain out of work longer and undermine state UI trust funds.

The labor movement is the largest workforce trainer of adults outside the U.S. military. Unfortunately, the Skills Act fails to take into account labor's leading role in workforce training. Instead, the legislation would categorically exclude labor participation in state and local workforce investment boards. This exclusion shows a willful ignorance of the labor-management relationship and the value that workers bring to workforce investment boards.

Additionally, H.R.803 would create a single Workforce Investment funding source and combine successful training programs, forcing at-risk groups to compete against

[United Steel, Paper and Forestry, Rubber, Manufacturing, Energy, Allied Industrial and Service Workers International Union](http://www.usw.org)

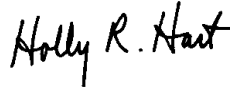
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each other for critical job retraining resources. USW is particularly concerned about the combination of dislocated worker program with other services. Dislocated workers, unemployed persons who have been laid off due to plant closings or the effects of unbalanced trade deals, require specific services, such as rapid response funding and trade adjustment assistance. The SKILLS Act inadequately addresses the importance of continuing these services.

The inadequacies of HR 803 are many; however there is a significant alternative to the SKILLS Act which I encourage you to consider. HR 798, the Workforce Investment Act of 2013, improves the workforce system, increases the diversity on local workforce boards - including labor - and ensures dislocated workers are given the proper attention needed after a mass layoff. Working people deserve to be included in their labor training and investment needs. **I urge you to support HR 798 and oppose HR 803.**

Sincerely,



Holly R. Hart
Assistant to the International President
Legislative Director

cc: Education And Workforce Committee