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April 8, 2024

U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the National Education Association, whose 3 million members include educators providing high-quality workforce development and career and technical education (CTE) programs that help students discover interests and talents leading to good careers, we write to express our concerns about H.R. 6655, the “A Stronger Workforce for America Act,” legislation to reauthorize the Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act (WIOA).

NEA members appreciate H.R. 6655’s inclusion of language to better align WIOA language and connections with the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act (to simplify CTE programs across local and state plans); expand WIOA one-stop centers and help students connect to existing resources; and foster stronger community college workforce development programs. However, we take issue with some of the bill’s provisions.

H.R. 6655 does not require local workforce development boards to include educators who directly teach and support students. If educator voices are not explicitly required, workforce education and training may be left to board members without the knowledge, experience, and expertise of board-certified educators. This exclusion could lead to programs lacking in depth, high-quality teaching techniques, and robust student support.

Furthermore, H.R. 6655 fails to increase labor representation on state and local workforce boards or change the definition of “industry or sector partnership” to ensure full labor representation. The bill also fails to include direct representation of educators in industry sector partnerships. When these crucial voices and advocates are not part of boards and partnerships, workforce programs lack perspectives and experiences that could make them richer, stronger, and more responsive to the needs of students, as well as learners already in the workforce.

NEA members also raise the issue of adequate funding for WIOA and other workforce development and CTE programs. Funding for these programs should be increased to match the ever-growing need for skills development. According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the United States spends less on workforce training [than most other G7 nations](#). Investing more in high-quality training programs will benefit not only individual students and workers, but our entire nation.

We share your interest in strengthening workforce development programs to ensure they lead to solid careers that build fulfilling lives, sustain families, and enrich our communities. At the same time, we take issue with several provisions in the “A Stronger Workforce for America Act” as currently written. We appreciate this opportunity to share our views on H.R. 6655.

Sincerely,

Marc Egan
Director of Government Relations
National Education Association