



The Honorable Kevin Brady
Chairman
House Ways and Means Committee
Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Richard Neal
Ranking Member
House Ways and Means Committee
Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Chairman Brady and Ranking Member Neal,

The California Workforce Association is a non-profit member association which represents all 45 of the Workforce Development Boards across the state of California as well as over 70 additional affiliate members from labor, education, industry, Chambers of Commerce, and community-based organizations. These business-led boards are the broker and convener of local workforce development across the state and bring together stakeholders to develop business-led strategies connected to regional economies and labor markets. Importantly for the welfare/workforce conversation, workforce development boards braid various resources seamlessly so that job seekers and employers can match the right skills to fill their talent pipeline.

The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Reauthorization effort is especially critical for workforce development boards with unemployment at historic lows because the boards are serving increasing numbers of TANF recipients. These individuals WANT to work but have several significant barriers to employment such as not having a high school diploma, long-term unemployment, child care issues, lack of access to transportation, criminal records, substance abuse/mental health issues, and lack of access to food, among others. At the local level in California, we are working to get these individuals 'job ready' by providing remedial education and trying to remove as many barriers as possible to get them into a training program that connects them with an in-demand occupation on a career pathway. CWA and several of its partners recently completed a study on our work with the TANF population and we know that these strategies work and move people from 'welfare to work' – it just takes more time than with someone who already possesses those skills¹. Data from FY 2015 shows a \$1.72 return on investment from federal taxes on wages and savings on TANF funding for every \$1 in public funds spent on Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth funding.

CWA supports several of the workforce related provisions in the JOBS for Success Act:

1. Alignment of JOBS outcomes with key Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) employment focused metrics
2. Removal of limitations on time spent in job training and career and technical education programs
3. Expands list of work activities to include apprenticeships and career and technical education

¹ **Workforce Development = Economic Success. Leveraging the United States Workforce Development Network: Success Stories from Across the Nation.** May 5, 2017.

4. Expands state transfer authority by allowing up to 50% of each state's block grant to WIOA

Federal investment in the workforce system has declined over the span of the last twenty years. Given the work requirements contained in the JOBS for Success Act and the lack of a funding increase over the five-year reauthorization, we are concerned about an increase in serving the TANF population without a corresponding dedicated funding increase to address the workload. As we have documented, this population is difficult to serve with multiple barriers to employment and the investment needs to be sustained and supported.

An increased federal investment in the JOBS for Success Act could also have a profound impact on children and families as a strong child care environment is essential for preparing children for educational success later in life. Expanding the transfer authority for the Child Care Development Block Grant and WIOA are both moves in a positive direction but perhaps a missed opportunity to further investment in those children who are the workforce of the future.

A robust talent pipeline is key to maintaining our country's economic growth and the workforce development system works everyday to capture that opportunity for all Americans. We look forward to working with you as this effort advances through the legislative process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Bob Lanter".

Bob Lanter
Executive Director
California Workforce Association