



March 3, 2011

John A. Boehner
Speaker, US House of Representatives
1011 Longworth House Office Building
Washington , DC

Dear Speaker Boehner;

On behalf of the members of the Southwest Ohio Region Workforce Investment Board serving the City of Cincinnati and Hamilton County, OH, I write to you to recognize the need for workforce development, job training, skilling and reskilling of our region's current jobseekers and workers as well as our young emerging workforce, and equally important assistance to our employers to gain the workers that they need to continue and grow.

As you know, the House passed H.R. 1, its Fiscal Year 2011 Continuing Resolution. This legislation provided the elimination of all funding, over \$3.6 billion, for the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) in Program Year 2011 and a \$175 million rescission of prior year funds. Beginning in July 1 of this year, these cuts would zero out all new funding for state and local programs under WIA -- programs that provide vital services for the nation's youth, unemployed, dislocated workers, and for America's businesses as they try to rebound from the recession. Simply put, this total elimination of funding for WIA would result in the end of the nation's employment and training system during one of the worst economic downturns in American history. With the general citizenry screaming for jobs and retraining, up against similar cries for fiscal restraint, we understand the challenges you are facing, but we ask you to consider tempering decisions that will only make the economic recovery slower and more devastating for more Americans.

This decision appears to be based on the perception that workforce development and job training programs funded under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) are uniformly not effective, and therefore expendable in this challenging budget climate in Washington. On behalf of the City of Cincinnati and Hamilton County, Ohio's business community, youth, and jobseekers, we disagree.

Over the past year, the WIA funded employment and training system serving nationally has provided training, employment and support services to over eight (8) million jobseekers nationally. In our city and county, the system has provided services to 13,468 residents. We provided core, intensive and training services to 2,289 adults and dislocated workers enabling these individuals to gain skills and become job ready. We placed 2,150 customers with 174 of them being former offenders. We served over 660 youth and exceeded the state standards for youth performance measures, significantly improving the literacy and numeracy competencies of those served by the WIA system.

We have expanded our partnerships across state lines working with WIBs in Indiana and Kentucky to serve over 200 employers in either layoffs or hiring opportunities and just last week worked with our local energy utility to produce a diversity job fair attended by over 300 trained candidates.

This system is vital to meeting the needs of the more than 14 million unemployed in this country and the thousands of residents in our county alone who need assistance in looking for work or accessing training that will provide them with the skills they need to find new employment. The WIA system provides our residents with career counseling and guidance, skills assessment, job matching services, skills training, employment assistance and more. We can hardly afford to turn our backs on our friends and neighbors (and your constituents) at this time.

In addition to providing vital services to jobseekers, workers and youth, the workforce system provides valuable support to our region's businesses and economic development efforts. The SWORWIB and our SuperJobs One-stop Center, funded through the Workforce Investment Act, has become a critical partner in our region's economic development efforts -- from directly supporting efforts to recruit new businesses to the region (by offering access to skilled workers and employment and training incentives), to saving money for local businesses as they begin to rehire new employees, assisting businesses to avert layoffs through skills upgrading, and supporting businesses that are closing or downsizing (providing needed assistance to workers as they search for new employment). We are partners with the economic development partnership of the CincinnatiUSA Regional Chamber for retention services to business and early warning for business problems, as well as partners in the exploration of a new industry sector focused on consumer research. This partnership with business and economic development is critical to helping our local businesses survive, and contributes to our region's economic growth and prosperity. Now is not the time to take away these vital services, when regional economic growth is paramount to our recovery and competitiveness, and we have after many years of work aligned economic development, educational and workforce efforts for the benefit of the region.

We commend all efforts to reduce the massive budget deficit, but we also know that it is the intent of Congress to stimulate job growth as well. With this in mind, we strongly urge you to reconsider the elimination of funding for the WIA system and to continue support for this and other programs that help to create and retain jobs, provide needed skills and transition assistance to workers, support businesses, and enhance economic growth.

We have enclosed a board list so you can see the diverse industries and partners serving on this workforce investment board and overseeing these public investments. We also have enclosed our most recent annual report which features our work of the last year and the last decade as we have committed to improvement in our delivery of services to business, workers, jobseekers and the community. Please help us continue with these improving services so we too can contribute to the economic revival for our local area, region and country.

Respectfully,

Michael Conner, Chairman
Southwest Ohio Region Workforce Investment Board and
Vice President, Human Resources, Frisch's Restaurants, Inc.

And

Sherry Kelley Marshall
Southwest Ohio Region Workforce Investment Board
President and CEO