



## Alliance For Learning Innovation

June 11, 2024

The Honorable Bernie Sanders  
Chair  
Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee

The Honorable Bill Cassidy  
Ranking Member  
Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee

Dear Chair Sanders and Ranking Member Cassidy,

The [Alliance for Learning Innovation \(ALI\)](#) appreciates this opportunity to share its views on the *Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)*. ALI is a coalition that brings together education nonprofits, philanthropy, and the private sector to advocate for building a better research and development (R&D) infrastructure in education. ALI advocates for increased education R&D capacity and supports the research and development of evidence-based interventions that center students and practitioners, advances equity, improves talent pathways, and expands the workforce needed to compete globally.

ALI commends the House of Representatives for its recent passage of H.R. 6655 *A Stronger Workforce for America Act*, a WIOA reauthorization effort, with significant bipartisan support. As the HELP Committee considers its own WIOA reauthorization efforts, ALI recommends it consider the following efforts to ensure federal workforce development efforts support a workforce data ecosystem, prioritize evidence-based strategies, and advance innovations in better aligning education and workforce development, particularly at the K-12 level.

Elements of H.R. 6655 ALI recommends the HELP Committee incorporate:

- Aligning the WIOA definition of “work-based learning” with the definition in the *Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act*;
- Encouraging local workforce boards to develop career pathways aligned with Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs offered in the area;
- Expanding work-based learning opportunities and developing partnerships between educational institutions as an allowable statewide youth activity;
- Including Economic Development Administration (EDA) workforce and economic development programs in the efforts local workforce partners could collaborate with;
- Establishing the Critical Industry Skills Fund as a statewide allowable activity with the governor’s reserve. Through the Critical Industry Skills fund, states will be able to support efforts to upskill workers in the priority industries selected by the state;



## **Alliance For Learning Innovation**

- Expanding the adoption and use of linked, open, and interoperable data related to credentials, skills, and other pertinent workforce data;
- Encouraging the use of real-time labor market data to ensure that workforce programs and initiatives are responsive to the actual and evolving needs of learners, workers, and employers, while ensuring that a diverse set of providers and sources can be utilized to meet this requirement;
- Authorizing the Workforce Data Quality Initiative.

Other elements ALI encourages the HELP Committee to consider it is reauthorization effort include:

- Incorporating a Workforce Development Innovation Fund with three tiers of funding to support the development and scale-up of evidence-based workforce development programs. This would allow a wide array of eligible entities to participate with a reserve of up to 10 percent of funds for technical assistance;
- Expanding work-based learning in Youth Workforce efforts including youth apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs, dual enrollment, and projects that create work-based learning opportunities for eligible youth.

These recommendations from ALI are grounded in education and workforce development models with strong evidence-bases. As the HELP Committee considers a WIOA reauthorization, it should ensure that all WIOA efforts, from the provision of supportive services, to accountability systems, to education and training services, are advancing a workforce development system that provides actionable data to ensure equitable opportunities for social and economic mobility. ALI looks forward to being a resource in this process.

Sincerely,

American Chemical Society

Data Quality Campaign

Education Reform Now

Federation of American Scientists

InnovateEDU

Knowledge Alliance

The Learning Agency

Bror Saxberg, Founder, LearningForge LLC

Jean-Claude Brizard, President and CEO, Digital Promise Global

William Gaudelli, Vice Provost for Innovation in Education, Lehigh University