May 18, 2012

Dear Chairman Kline and Ranking Member Miller:

As you move forward to mark-up and continue deliberations on the reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), we, the undersigned, write to express our concerns on the Workforce Investment Improvement Act of 2012 **(**HR4297). We recognize the need to maximize the efficiency of federal resources in these tenuous fiscal times. However, the consolidation of federal youth funding streams into a predominantly adult focused workforce investment fund will neither improve the efficiency nor expand the quality of youth program delivery in this country. The likely impact will be quite the contrary. As drafted, HR4297 would likely dismantle the current youth education, employment and training system for low-income and disconnected youth. The youth funding streams slated for consolidation in this bill served over 370,000 mostly low income and mostly minority youth. According to the PY 2010 WIA Data book, 72% of those who exited the program went on to employment, advanced training, or postsecondary education and of those who were dropouts upon enrollment, 50% received high school diplomas or GEDs. These youth programs are a lifeline to labor market opportunity for so many low income youth. Many of the local areas have been strategic in leveraging other funding streams and community resources to provide more comprehensive interventions for high risk youth.

Forty-two percent of the $6 billion consolidated workforce investment fund comes from funding streams that were previously dedicated to youth programming. Yet, the only focus on youth in regard to this fund is the Youth Challenge Fund where governors are allowed to set aside up to 18% of the Workforce Investment Fund for a competitive grant program. The 18 percent is the cap on what can be set aside for youth and there is no minimum requirement. The lack of any serious targets or accountability for serving youth is a clear sign to state and local boards that these funds can be repurposed. We feel the needs of youth can easily fall victim to other state workforce priorities.

At a time when youth employment is at the lowest level in 60 years, when fewer than one in five minority teens found work last summer, when forty to fifty percent of youth in high poverty communities are dropping out of school, we need to strengthen our federally funded youth delivery system and programs to provide these youth with education and labor market options and wrap-around supports they will need to succeed in a 21st century labor market. We need a WIA reauthorization that will build upon the innovation and lessons of the past decade and strengthen the capacity of local communities to rally resources and funding streams more strategically to provide youth with multiple pathways to labor market credentials.

Thus we respectfully request as you proceed with WIA reauthorization that you consider 1) retaining a separate youth funding stream that flows to the local levels, 2) restoring the key provisions of the original WIA legislation related to the strategic role of youth councils, stakeholder involvement in youth program design, and the essential elements for comprehensive youth programming, and 3) retaining the national youth programs which provide important opportunities and supports for our most vulnerable youth.

We thank you for your leadership in moving this essential piece of legislation and look forward to a bi-partisan approach to addressing our workforce and youth challenges. We ask that as you proceed you consider the 6.7 million youth age 16 to 24 that are estimated to be out of school and out of work. They need a system of support with a laser focus on their needs. This reauthorization presents the opportunity to do so. If you have any questions or would like to discuss our

recommendations, please contact Linda Harris, Director, Youth Policy, CLASP, (202)906 – 8012 lharris@clasp.org or Mala Thakur, Executive Director, National Youth Employment Coalition, (202) 659-1064 mt@nyec.org.

Sincerely,

****As of May 18, 2012****

National Organizations (*Denotes Steering Committee Member Organization)
Afterschool Alliance
Alliance for Excellent Education
Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance, AFL-CIO
Center for Law and Social Policy*
Coalition for Juvenile Justice
Community Action Partnership
County Welfare Directors Association of California
Daughters of Jerusalem Sisters of Mercy
First Focus Campaign for Children*
Forum for Youth Investment*
International Federation of Black Prides, Inc.
Jobs for the Future*
National Collaboration for Youth
National Council of La Raza*
National Council of State Directors of Adult Education
National Job Corps Association
National Transitional Jobs Network
National Youth Employment Coalition*
NETWORK, A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby
Sar Levitan Center, Institute for Policy Studies, Johns Hopkins University*
The Corps Network*
Treatment Communities of America
United Way Worldwide
Wider Opportunities for Women
YouthBuild USA*
Young Invincibles*

Alaska
Juneau Youth Services

Arkansas
Western Arkansas Employment Development Agency
Phoenix Youth & Family Services, Inc.

ABOUT THE CAMPAIGN FOR YOUTH
Housed at the Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP), the Campaign for Youth is an alliance of organizations who are concerned about the persistence, yet seeming invisibility, of the challenges confronting more than 6.7 million young people in this nation who are disconnected from education, employment and opportunity. Established in 2002 by the leadership of national youth serving organizations, the Campaign for Youth's mission is to build a united voice for disadvantaged and disconnected youth in this nation, and to build a constituency for action. For more information about the Campaign for Youth, please visit www.campaignforyouth.org or email kbird@clasp.org.

Arizona

Arizona Call-A-Teen Youth Resources, Inc.
Arizona Opportunities Industrialization Center
CFOSP
City of Phoenix, Workforce
Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance of Maricopa County West
Friendly House, Inc.
Gila/Pinal Workforce Investment Board
Greenlee Career Center & Virtual One-Stop Resource Center
JFCS
Linkages, Inc.
Literacy Volunteers of Maricopa County
Seaver Consulting, LLC
Tucson Youth Development
Workforce Investment Act
Yuma Private Industry Council

California

Alameda County WIB
Arriba Juntos
Bay Area Community Resources
California Indian Manpower Consortium
Career Resource Department
Children's Law Center of California
Compact
CSET
Diploma Plus
Employment Development Department
Escondido Education COMPACT
Fresno County Economic Opportunities Commission
Horizons Unlimited
Investment Associates
Juma Ventures
Kings View Ready, Set, Go!
Larkin Street Youth Services
New Ways to Work
Palomar College
Panama Buena Vista Union School District
Project YES (Youth Employment Services)
San Diego workforce partnership
San Fransico Human Service Agency

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Spark Action
SPRA
Strive
Truancy Assessment & Resource Center
United Way of Bay Area
Yuba County Office of Education Regional Career Center

Colorado
National Association of Counsel for Children

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
Department of Community and Cultural Affairs, CNMI

Connecticut
Ajar Communications
Capital Workforce Partners
Castle Associates
City Seed
Common Ground High School
Elm City Fellows
New Haven Urban Resources Initiative
Our Piece of the Pie
Public Allies Connecticut
Private Citizen
SE Central Labor Council Student Internship and Union Mentoring Program

District of Columbia
Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law
Citiwide Computer and Nursing Assistant Center
DC Alliance of Youth Advocates
Fair Chance DC
Latin American Youth Center
Sasha Bruce Youthwork, Inc.
StandUp For Kids
United Way of the National Capital Area
Urban Alliance

Florida
Urban Strategies

Georgia
Caribbean-American Advancement Foundation, Inc.

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CobbWorks, Inc.
Especially For Kids Christian Academy
Hearts to Nourish Hope, Inc
MCM Advising
Prevention PLUS, Inc.
Youthbuild USA

Iowa
Iowa Comprehensive Human Services
IowaWorks Iowa Valley
New Directions Alternative High School
Results
Youth and Shelter Services

Illinois
Alternative Schools Network
Central States SER
Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago
Chicago Alliance to End Homelessness
Comprehensive Community Solutions, Inc.
Emerson Park Development Corporation
Genesis Housing Development Corporation
Illinois Collaboration on Youth
Instituto del Progreso Latino
Introspect Youth Services, Inc.
Kaleidoscope, Inc.
Kenwood Oakland Community Organization
Lawrence Hall Youth Services
Loyola University Chicago
Manufactoring Works
Marillac Social Center
McDougal Family Foundation
National Transitional Jobs Network
Prologue, Inc.
RLLA
Rock River Training Corporation
Southern Illinois University
Teens Against Killing Everywhere
The Young People's Project
University of Illinois
West Central Development Council
YMCA of Rock River Valley

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YouthBuild McLean County

Indiana
CMD Consulting

Kansas
Electric Dreams

Kentucky
National Safe Place

Louisiana
Educational & Treatment Council, Inc.
Lafayette Business and Career Solution Center
Lafayette Workforce Investment Board
Voices of Experience, Inc.

Massachusetts
Boston Youth Service Network (BYSN)
Center for Youth and Communities, Brandeis University
The Young People's Project
Work, Inc.

Maine
Preble Street Teen Services

Maryland
Charles County NAACP
Committee to Elect Carletta Fellows
Crittenton Women's Union
Griffin Enterprises, LLC
KRA Youth Employability Services
Maryland Cure
Mayor's Office of Employment, City of Baltimore
National Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health
OHHS PTSA
Prince George's County Head Start Parent Policy Council
Prison Ministry Task Force, Diocese of Maryland
The After-School Institute
United Way of the National Capital Area
Youth MOVE National
Youth Opportunity Academy - Baltimore MD

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Michigan
D.I.V.A.Z
Ingham Lansing Community Coalition for Youth
Mott Community College
NSO-Youth Initiatives Project
One Love Global
REACH Studio Art Center
Michigan's ChildrenThe Young People's Project

Minnesota
Crowley, White & Helmer
Department of Employment & Economic Development
Regional Transition Coordinators
Workforce Development, Inc.

Missouri
Adult Education and Literacy
Mers/Goodwill
Operation Breakthrough, Inc.
Washington University

North Carolina
Columbus County DREAM Center

Nebraska
Directions Diploma Center
University of Nebraska, Omaha

Nevada
Poor Students
New Mexico
Dream Tree Project
Michelle Warren Law, LLC.
Nevada Adult Educators (NAE)
Youth Development, Inc.

New York
Action for A Better Community
Campaign for Tomorrow's Workforce
CASES

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Cohen Strategy Group, LLC
Council for Advancement of Adult Literacy
Covenant House
CUNY
Education and Workforce Consultants
John Adams YABC
Literacy Assistance Center
Nubian Directions II, Inc.
NYC Workforce Investment Board
SoBRO
Stanley M. Isaacs Neighborhood Center

New Jersey
Crossroads Programs
LINC
Men and Women United for Youth & Families, CDC
The Work Group, NJ Youth Corps
Urban Promise Ministries

North Carolina
The Work Group
Urban Promise Ministries

Ohio
Belmont County Dept. of Job and Family Services/WIA
Center of Hope
Jefferson County Dept. of Job & Family Services
Lucas County CASA
Lucas County Workforce Development Agency
Mansfield Young People's Organization
Trumbull County One Stop

Oklahoma
Tribal Education Department National Assembly

Oregon
CAPECO
Chehalem Youth & Family Services
City of Portland
Columbia River Youth Corps, St. Helens School District
General Political Activist
Habitat for Humanity of the Mid-Willamette Valley

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Hillboro In-School Program
Integral Youth Services
Interface Network Inc.
Janus Youth Programs, Inc
Job Growers Incorporated
Lane Workforce Partnership
McKenzie School District
Merlo Station High School M.O.V.E. Program
Mt. Hood Community College Project YESS
MTC WORKS
Multnomah County
New Avenues for Youth
Northwest Family Services
Open Meadow Alternative Schools
Oregon Citizen USA
Outside In
Pleasant Hill High School
Portland Opportunities Industrialization Center
Portland/Vancouver Realist of NAREB
Project Masters
SLSD
The National Crittenton Foundation
Workforce Investment Board for the City of Portland, Multnomah and Washington Counties
Workforce Investment Council of Clackamas County
Worksystems, Inc.
Youth Opportunities (YOOP)

Pennsylvania
All Education Matters
CURE-Women Incarcerated
Gulf Bend Center
James Hughes Memorial Leadership Academy
Oasis Center
Philadelphia Futures
Philadelphia Youth Network
Philadelphia Zoo
Pike County Workforce Development
TRIO Upward Bound, Community College of Philadelphia
Village of Champions Youth Network
Youth Ministry

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Rhode Island
Community College of Rhode Island

South Carolina
Friendship Baptist Church
Nita's Personal Touch & Creations

Texas
Mission Waco/Mission World
Unlocking Doors, Inc.
Wayne County Job Training

Virginia
Alexandria/Arlington Workforce Investment Board
Crater Regional Workforce Investment Board
Mental Health America of Virginia
PCCA/WIA Youth on the Move
Pittsylvania Community Services
Presbyterian Homes & Family Services
Region 2000 Workforce Investment Board
Southside Virginia Community College
This Valley Works, TAP Youth Services
Youth Development Center

Vermont
jwtGroup, PC
The Tutorial Center
VT Works for Women

Washington
Early Minority
Orion Center
The Ave Project
SkillSource
South Seattle Community College
SW Washington Workforce Development Council
YouthCare

West Virginia
NPWIB, Inc.

Wisconsin

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Northcott Neighborhood House, Inc.
TransCenter for Youth
Walker's Point Youth & Family Center
Wisconsin Council on Children and Families
Wisconsin Association for Runaway Services

cc: Members of the House Education and Workforce Committee

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