



March 5, 2025

The Honorable Burgess Owens
Chair
Subcommittee on Higher Education and
Workforce Development
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Alma S. Adams
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Higher Education and
Workforce Development
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair Owens and Ranking Member Adams:

On behalf of the National Retail Federation (NRF), I write to thank you for calling today's hearing entitled, "Strengthening WIOA: Improving Outcomes for America's Workforce." Retailers have long supported the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). Since the passage of WIOA in 2014, both the workforce and the broader economy have experienced significant structural changes. As such, NRF reasserts the need to update and improve the Act to guide more Americans towards successful careers.

The National Retail Federation passionately advocates for the people, brands, policies and ideas that help retail succeed. From its headquarters in Washington, D.C., NRF empowers the industry that powers the economy. Retail is the nation's largest private-sector employer, contributing \$5.3 trillion to annual GDP and supporting more than one in four U.S. jobs — 55 million working Americans. For over a century, NRF has been a voice for every retailer and every retail job, educating, inspiring and communicating the powerful impact retail has on local communities and global economies.

NRF is pleased that the Subcommittee is concentrating on modernizing WIOA. In the previous Congress, NRF was supportive of the bipartisan compromise titled, "A Stronger Workforce for America Act." That bill addressed numerous ongoing challenges within the workforce development system. The reforms were aimed at making critical updates to WIOA, including the enhancement of the delivery of high-quality services to youth, workers, and employers, the improvement of worker skill development, and the strengthening of connections between employers and the workforce system.

NRF remains particularly supportive of initiatives aimed at providing job seekers with opportunities to obtain industry-recognized credentials that teach essential, foundational skills. NRF continues to endorse the pursuit of "micro-credentials," which allow individuals to demonstrate possession of specific skills necessary for securing employment or promotion. The bipartisan agreement reached in the last Congress included significant provisions promoting both objectives. As the Subcommittee considers new approaches, the NRF strongly recommends that this language be incorporated into any forthcoming legislation.

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Again, NRF commends you on working in a bipartisan, bicameral way to find innovative methods of assisting employers in filling job openings with qualified workers. We respectfully request that this letter be made part of the official record of today's hearing.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David French". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping initial "D" and a cursive "F".

David French
Executive Vice President
Government Relations