

December 12, 2024

The Honorable Virginia Foxx
Chair
House Committee on Education and
the Workforce
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Robert “Bobby” Scott
Ranking Member
House Committee on Education and
the Workforce
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Bernie Sanders
Chair
Senate Committee on Health, Education,
Labor, and Pensions
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Bill Cassidy, M.D.
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Health, Education,
Labor, and Pensions
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chair Foxx, Chair Sanders, Ranking Member Scott and Ranking Member Cassidy,

On behalf of the undersigned youth and workforce development organizations from around the country, we applaud House passage of the bipartisan Stronger Workforce for America Act along with the release of the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee bipartisan discussion draft to reauthorize the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). We are encouraged that both bills and the new bicameral and bipartisan agreement “A Stronger Workforce for America Act” include robust policy to help Opportunity Youth (OY) achieve positive career and education outcomes.

We are collectively committed to supporting the newly formed Bipartisan Opportunity Youth Caucus (BOYC) created by Reps. Steel (R-CA) and Carter (D-CA) and through that caucus, advancing supportive policies for Opportunity Youth and youth involved with foster care, juvenile justice, and youth homelessness systems. That is why we are pleased to see language from both the House and Senate and in the new agreement that broadens program eligibility to include homeless and foster youth within the new definition of “Opportunity Youth.” Currently, accessing WIOA for systems-involved youth can be challenging, especially if they are concurrently pursuing their education goals. Expanding the definition of Opportunity Youth to include systems-involved youth in WIOA will help youth organizations meet local needs and encourage state and local boards to develop service delivery systems to reach and serve this population.

The new bipartisan A Stronger Workforce for America Act also includes important policy changes that will improve services and outcomes for OY. That is why we are also urging you to work toward a final bipartisan compromise that maintains a high funding priority for OY while expanding effective training models such as Individual Training Accounts (ITA), work-based learning, and post-secondary credential bearing programs. We also encourage a final compromise include a focus on OY in state and local planning and board representation, along with data collection; increase the ability of local one-stops and programs to presume eligibility for services; encourage dual enrollment; and authorize more robust funding levels for WIOA programs overall.

Final passage of a WIOA reauthorization in this Congress should also include language from the Senate's discussion draft to establish Youth Apprenticeships. This language is critical to help address barriers youth have to success transitioning from secondary education and would allow for increased support services and open new doors for partnerships with leading industries, post-secondary education and training providers, while also prioritizing pathways into in-demand sectors.

As the negotiations around reauthorizing WIOA advance, our national network stands ready to help support this legislation moving forward, along with the new BOYC, and speak to the benefit of developing more pathways and supportive policies for Opportunity Youth. We look forward to working with you to ensure a final bipartisan bill is signed into law before the end of the year and again applaud your bipartisan efforts to advance this reauthorization to date.

Sincerely,

Members of the Bipartisan Opportunity Youth Caucus Coalition

Aspen Institute Forum for Community Solutions	National
Big Brothers Big Sisters	National
iFoster	National
Jobs for the Future (JFF)	National
National Network for Youth	National
National Youth Employment Coalition (NYEC)	National
Opportunity Youth United	National
REDF	National
Service Year Alliance	National
The Corps Network	National
The Forum for Youth Investment	National
Young Invincibles	National
YouthBuild Global	National
Covenant House International	Alaska
Cradle to Career Partnership	Arizona
Per Scholas	Arizona
Beloved Community	Arkansas
A New Day Home Care	California
Alliance for Children's Rights	California
Alliance for Community Empowerment (ACE)	California
ASC Foster Care Project	California

Bay Area Community Resources	California
Better Youth	California
Bridges from School to Work	California
California Coalition for Youth	California
California EDGE Coalition	California
California Family Life Center	California
California Indian Manpower Consortium, Inc.	California
California Opportunity Youth Network	California
Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO)	California
Children Now	California
Coalition for Advanced Restorative Equity (CARE4LA)	California
Coalition for Responsible Community Development	California
Conservation Corps of Long Beach	California
Covenant House International	California
Creating Coding Careers	California
CreatorUp	California
Edge Collaborative	California
Educate California	California
El Proyecto del Barrio Inc.	California
EntreNous Youth Empowerment Services	California
Envision Your Pathway	California
First Institute Training and Management, Inc.	California
First Place for Youth	California
Growing Big Ideas	California
iFoster	California
John Burton Advocates For Youth	California
Kids in Common	California
Kids in the Spotlight, Inc.	California
Kollab Youth	California
LA County Department of Economic Opportunity	California
Larkin Street Youth Services	California
Learning Works	California
New Door Ventures	California
New Ways to Work, Inc	California

OneFuture Coachella Valley	California
Paige Innovative Consulting LLC	California
Per Scholas	California
Reinvent Stockton Foundation	California
Richmond YouthWORKS	California
Riverside Community College District	California
Riverside County Workforce Development Division	California
Robbin and Associates	California
Seen & Heard	California
Sycamores	California
The Academy Project	California
The Community College Foundation	California
The RightWay Foundation	California
UNITE-LA	California
Urban Strategies Council	California
Young Invincibles	California
Youth Mental Health Academy, Child Mind Institute	California
Juma Ventures	California,
Aspen Institute	Colorado
Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO)	Colorado
Colorado Youth for a Change	Colorado
Per Scholas	Colorado
QuickStart	Colorado
Young Invincibles	Colorado
EASTCONN	Connecticut
Fairfield County's Community Foundation	Connecticut
NRWIB	Connecticut
Our Piece of the Pie, Inc.	Connecticut
Covenant House International	Florida
Mega Social Enterprise Inc.	Florida
Per Scholas	Florida
Bridges from School to Work	Georgia
Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO)	Georgia
Covenant House International	Georgia

Per Scholas	Georgia
RYSE	Hawaii
Bridges from School to Work	Illinois
Covenant House International	Illinois
First Institute Training and Management, Inc.	Illinois
Per Scholas	Illinois
Young Invincibles	Illinois
Foster Success	Indiana
Keys2Work	Indiana
Per Scholas	Indiana
Urban Wildlife Adventures Not for Profit	Indiana
Oakmont Education	Iowa
Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO)	Kentucky
The Book Works	Kentucky
Beloved Community	Louisiana
Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO)	Louisiana
Covenant House International	Louisiana
KLG Consulting`	Louisiana
New Orleans Career Center	Louisiana
New Orleans Youth Alliance	Louisiana
Operation Restoration	Louisiana
Reconcile New Orleans	Louisiana
The First 72+	Louisiana
Covenant House International	Maryland
Department of Juvenile Services	Maryland
Per Scholas	Maryland
Bridges from School to Work	Massachusetts
City of Boston	Massachusetts
Education Development Center	Massachusetts
Office of Workforce Development - City of Boston	Massachusetts
Per Scholas	Massachusetts
United Way of Massachusetts Bay	Massachusetts
Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO)	Michigan
Covenant House International	Michigan

GearUp2Lead	Michigan
Per Scholas	Michigan
Urban neighborhood initiatives	Michigan
HIRED	Minnesota
Refill Jackson Initiative	Mississippi
Beloved Community	Missouri
Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater St. Louis	Missouri
Covenant House International	Missouri
Per Scholas	Missouri
Reach Higher Montana	Montana
Covenant House International	New Jersey
Newark Opportunity Youth Network	New Jersey
Per Scholas	New Jersey
The Work Group/ New Jersey Youth Corps	New Jersey
Beloved Community	New Mexico
Bridge Street Development Corporation	New York
Bridges from School to Work	New York
Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO)	New York
Central Brooklyn Economic Development Corporation	New York
Child Development Center of MMCC	New York
Covenant House International	New York
Ellen Baxt Consulting	New York
Grace Institute	New York
GreenPath Alliance	New York
JobsFirstNYC	New York
Mosholu Montefiore Community Center	New York
New York Center for Interpersonal Development, Inc. NYCID	New York
Office of Workforce Development and Innovation - College of Staten Island	New York
Opportunities for a Better Tomorrow	New York
Per Scholas	New York
PHI	New York
Phipps Neighborhoods	New York
Snug Harbor Cultural Center & Botanical Garden	New York

South Asian Fund for Education, Scholarship and Training, Inc	New York
Staten Island Partnership for Community Wellness	New York
Stella & Charles Guttman Community College CUNY	New York
Tech Kids Unlimited	New York
The Community-Based Education Movement	New York
The Service Collaborative of WNY, Inc.	New York
Union Settlement Association	New York
Young Invincibles	New York
Youth Action YouthBuild East Harlem	New York
Youth Mental Health Academy, Child Mind Institute	New York
Youth WINS Coalition	New York
Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO)	North Carolina
HIGHTS, INC.	North Carolina
Per Scholas	North Carolina
Second Family Foundation	North Carolina
Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO)	Ohio
Oakmont Education	Ohio
Per Scholas	Ohio
The PEERS Project (formerly Lawrence County Youth Board)	Ohio
Youth Opportunities Unlimited	Ohio
Beloved Community	Oklahoma
Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO)	Oklahoma
Bridges from School to Work	Pennsylvania
Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO)	Pennsylvania
Covenant House International	Pennsylvania
Per Scholas	Pennsylvania
Philadelphia Youth Network	Pennsylvania
Beloved Community	Tennessee
Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO)	Tennessee
Beloved Community	Texas
Big Brothers Big Sisters of El Paso	Texas
Big Thought	Texas
Bridges from School to Work	Texas

Citizens for Educational Excellence, dba. Education to Employment Partners	Texas
Communities Foundation of Texas	Texas
Covenant House International	Texas
Deep East Texas College and Career Academy	Texas
Education to Employment Partners	Texas
Goodwill Industries of Central Texas	Texas
Lone Star Justice Alliance	Texas
Per Scholas	Texas
QuickStart	Texas
Retired Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas	Texas
Texas Network of Youth Services	Texas
Trellis Foundation	Texas
Young Invincibles	Texas
Per Scholas	Virginia
Juma Ventures	Washington
Per Scholas	Washington
Covenant House International	Washington, DC
Per Scholas	Washington, DC