

JOE DONNELLY
2ND DISTRICT, INDIANA

COMMITTEES:
FINANCIAL SERVICES
VETERANS' AFFAIRS

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

1530 LONGWORTH HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-3915
FAX: (202) 225-6798

DISTRICT OFFICES:
207 WEST COLFAX
SOUTH BEND, IN 46601
(574) 288-2780
FAX: (574) 288-2825

LAPORTE COUNTY COMPLEX
813 SOUTH MICHIGAN, SUITE 100
LAPORTE, IN 46350
(219) 326-6808 EXT. 414
FAX: (574) 288-2825

300 EAST BROADWAY, SUITE #102
LOGANSPORT, IN 46947
(574) 753-2671
FAX: (574) 753-7615

October 27, 2011

The Honorable John Kline
Chairman
House Committee on Education and the
Workforce
2181 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable George Miller
Ranking Member
House Committee on Education and the
Workforce
2181 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Kline and Ranking Member Miller:

I write to you today to request a legislative hearing on H.R. 1325, *The AMERICA Works Act*, and that the bill's provisions be considered for inclusion in a reauthorized Workforce Investment Act (WIA). I believe the ideas contained in this bipartisan legislation, which I introduced along with Rep. Todd Russell Platts and Rep. Dan Boren in April of this year, would be helpful in getting Americans back to work in this difficult economic environment.

In March I held a manufacturing summit at Ivy Tech Community College in Indianapolis to discuss issues facing the manufacturing industry and its workers. Representatives in education, business, and labor came from every corner of the state to present their views and participate in a conversation on how we can restore vitality and growth in the manufacturing sector and ensure that it remains a robust source of good jobs in the future. During my summit, one common theme was the skills gap—the difficulty many employers are having trying to find workers with the necessary skills to fill open positions. Following the summit, I worked with the National Association of Manufacturers and Reps. Platts and Boren to introduce *The AMERICA Works Act*.

A recent study conducted by Deloitte and the Manufacturing Institute draws further attention to the skills gap. The study found that despite continued high unemployment, up to 600,000 positions remain unfilled because employers are unable to find workers with the right skills. *The AMERICA Works Act* aims to reduce that number, but not by increasing the amount of funds the federal government already invests into workforce training programs annually. Instead the bill would prioritize existing WIA funds, as well as Trade Adjustment Assistance and Perkins Vocation-Technical Education Act funds, for programs that teach toward nationally portable, industry recognized skill credentials. Additionally, the bill addresses the need for a more streamlined way of categorizing and credentialing specific skills so that we can more efficiently connect skilled job seekers with the employers who need them.

Encouraging education centers to offer programs teaching in-demand skills would help ensure our companies can find workers equipped to compete in today's global economy. Likewise, this

emphasis on in-demand, portable credentials would help those workers who already have these skills or are training for them to more easily gain and keep good jobs.

As you continue to work toward reauthorizing WIA, I would encourage the committee to examine *The AMERICA Works Act* in a future legislative hearing. I believe the bill's provisions would aid a reauthorized and improved WIA in updating our existing workforce training structure.

Sincerely,


Joe Donnelly
Member of Congress