

# AFL-CIO

## LEGISLATIVE ALERT

July 19, 2024

The Honorable Bernie Sanders, Chairman  
The Honorable Bill Cassidy, M.D., Ranking Member  
U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions  
428 Senate Dirksen Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Sanders and Ranking Member Cassidy:

I am following up on our May 7th letter to the Committee and our July 5th submitted comments on the Committee's draft Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) reauthorization bill. We appreciate the efforts the Committee has taken in seeking input from the workforce development stakeholders and hope that our recommendations are taken under serious consideration.

The AFL-CIO continues to advocate that full and active participation of unions in our nation's workforce development system is critical if programs are to provide high quality training and career pathways. While employers clearly should have a say in the workforce development strategies, there is no reason that it should come at the expense of workers also having a meaningful seat at the table.

We understand that drafting bipartisan legislation presents myriad challenges and one of the primary difficulties lies in finding common ground that satisfies both sides without compromising core principles. One core principle we hope the Committee will never compromise on is its belief in the need for basic labor law protections for all and accountability from those who receive taxpayer dollars.

We understand that some stakeholders have raised concerns with language the Committee included on adherence to federal labor laws. Taxpayer funds should be used to prepare workers for good jobs, not subsidize low-road employers. As a matter of simple accountability, taxpayers should be able to expect that the employers receiving substantial federal funding authorized by the WIOA are complying with the law and respecting workers' rights.

We urge the Committee not to be misled by arguments suggesting that including language on adherence to federal labor laws discourages law-abiding employers' participation in the workforce development system. Instead, we urge the Committee to continue an approach that puts workers and their welfare at the center of federal workforce development policy.

Sincerely,



Jody Calemine  
Director, Government Affairs