

AFL-CIO

LEGISLATIVE ALERT

April 20, 2026

The Honorable Tim Walberg, Chair
The Honorable Bobby Scott, Ranking Member
Committee on Education & the Workforce
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chair Walberg and Ranking Member Scott:

I am writing to you on behalf of the AFL-CIO regarding the reauthorization of the Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and to express our opposition to the newly introduced Republican bill “A Stronger Workforce for America Act of 2026” (H.R. 8210), scheduled for markup this week. H.R. 8210 falls short on the key issues of concern to the labor movement and our nation’s students and workers.

A critical problem in the bill is that it continues the Trump Administration’s dismantling of the U.S. Department of Education and would transfer Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act funding and programs to the U.S. Department of Labor. We have strongly opposed the abolition of the Department of Education, as have a wide array of organizations that care about public education. In this case, adult education serves a core public education function that helps workers build literacy, numeracy, English language skills, digital skills, high school equivalency, and builds pathways into postsecondary education, training, and family-sustaining employment. Removing adult education from the Education Department threatens to weaken coordination with K–12 systems, community colleges, teacher unions and other education partners at precisely the moment when Congress should be improving alignment across systems instead of fragmenting them.

There are other areas where H.R. 8210 falls short as well, from increasing block granting to reducing funding in various ways. The Committee should instead work together on a more worker-centered approach. As the AFL-CIO and our affiliates have communicated in the past, reauthorization must prioritize a strong federal role in our nation’s workforce development system, support merit staffing, continue targeted programs and reject block grants and expanded waiver authority. Additionally, it should strengthen labor representation on workforce boards and industry sector partnerships, require labor consultation and concurrence on worker training programs, and strengthen labor standards and worker protections and ensure employer compliance. Finally, reauthorization must protect and advance Registered Apprenticeship programs as well as joint labor-management partnerships and establish full access to high quality education and training programs and ensure program accountability, strong performance standards and job quality.

WIOA reauthorization must ensure that workers have access to worker-centered, high-quality, fully funded training and education programs that prepare them for the jobs of today and tomorrow that will, among other things, help them meet the challenges posed by automation, artificial intelligence, and other emerging technologies that continue to reshape the economy. This bill as drafted does not accomplish these goals.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jody Calemine". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent loop at the end.

Jody Calemine
Director, Government Affairs