



December 11, 2023

The Honorable Virginia Foxx
Chairwoman
Committee on Education and the Workforce
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Bobby Scott
Ranking Member
Committee on Education and the Workforce
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Foxx and Ranking Member Scott:

The Skills First Coalition, a consortium of employers and innovative education providers advocating to advance policies that invest in and strengthen the alignment between education and skills training for in-demand jobs, is writing today to express our strong support for H.R. 6655, A Stronger Workforce for America Act, and urges its swift passage.

As a Coalition, we believe Congress must do more to recognize and equalize many non-traditional ways that workers and learners obtain in-demand skills and secure good paying jobs. In November, we sent [a letter recommending policies](#) to modernize the current Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and are encouraged that H.R. 6655 takes significant steps toward these goals. In particular, the bill:

- Directs no less than 50% of funds toward workforce skills education, ensuring our workforce system focuses on its primary goal of providing learners with in-demand occupational skills needed to compete in today's labor market.
- Promotes employer-led learning models, better linking education to work.
- Incentivizes states to expand the adoption of skills-based hiring and learning that reward an individual's competencies, knowledge, and prior work experience.
- Increases the cap on incumbent worker training, helping our current workforce to reskill and upskill so they can remain competitive.

- Includes digital literacy as a foundational skill to better align with an ever-changing economy.
- Encourages states to streamline access to the Eligible Training Provider List and offer reciprocity among each other to ensure more individuals access high-quality education providers.
- Promotes better access to centralized data tools, including state wage records and the National Directory of New Hires, to measure outcomes consistently, reliably, accurately, and in real-time.
- Allows high-quality in-person, online, and hybrid learning models that individuals can access in a variety of flexible and innovative ways.

We applaud you in taking this bipartisan first step to reauthorize WIOA, especially for developing a more streamlined approach for individuals to access, complete, and earn industry-recognized skills education valued by employers.

The Skills First Coalition urges the Committee to pass H.R. 6655. America's learners, workers, and employers deserve a workforce system that keeps pace with technological advancements demanded in the workplace and is accountable, flexible, and innovative in its delivery of high-quality learning.

Sincerely,

The Skills First Coalition

Autos Drive America

Cengage Group

Chegg

CompTIA

Coursera

HP

IBM Corporation

International Paper

LinkedIn

Presidents Forum

Randstad

RILA – Retail Industry Leaders Association

SHRM – Society for Human Resource Management

Western Governors University

cc: Members of the U.S. House Committee on Education and the Workforce