

Dear Senator/ Rep.

I am writing as a member of the Commission on Adult Basic Education (COABE) and as a constituent. **ADD A SENTENCE OR TWO ON WHO YOU ARE AND WHAT YOU DO.**

Adult Education programs are in crisis. Demand for classes exceeds supply in virtually every state. Federal spending on adult education has declined by 25 percent in real terms since 2002, and the number of students served has declined from 2.7 million to 1.6 million. I urge you to support the funding of Adult Education programs at a minimum of \$596 million, although we need the \$635 million authorized in the **Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)** if that important piece of legislation is to succeed.

Adult Education provides a path from low-income jobs and dead-end futures to family-sustaining jobs and postsecondary education. In an increasingly competitive world we must empower individuals, families, and communities with the educational opportunities they need to harness the talents of millions of Americans who cannot read well enough to thrive in the economy, perform basic math, use a computer, or solve problems creatively.

Some facts:

- Estimates are that we can save to \$1.4 billion per year in reduced costs from crime if the high school completion rate increased by just 1 percent for all men aged 20 to 60.
- By neglecting the adults who need services, we also affect their kids. Almost 60 percent of children whose parents lack a college education live in low-income families. These children are less likely themselves to get a good education and secure family-sustaining jobs. Mothers and fathers who improve their basic skills are better equipped to help their children succeed.
- Research shows that 100 hours or more of Adult Education attendance equates to \$9,620 in extra earnings per year.

At current funding levels, programs cannot meet the needs of our nation's changing demographics. The share of high school graduates going directly into college is declining. Adult Education programs are the on-ramp to job training and postsecondary education for many low-skilled adults. However, at today's funding level, **the system serves only 60 percent of the number served in 2001, and only five percent of the eligible students nationwide.** If we are to remain globally competitive, we must invest in our adult education system.

Thank you for your support.