

Job Training

The Republican Labor-HHS-Education appropriations bill provides inadequate funding to meet the needs of the nation's workforce development system. Including Job Corps, *the bill cuts funding for Training and Employment Services by nearly \$200 million*, amounting to a 4 percent reduction below current funding levels. Funding for the Dislocated Worker National Reserve, which awards National Emergency Grants in the case of natural disaster and mass layoffs for the training of those dislocated workers to move to high-growth industries, is cut by a whopping \$100 million. The Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF), which awards grants on a competitive basis to states and partnerships to support innovative approaches to the design and delivery of employment and training services and to scale up best practices, is completely eliminated. In addition, the bill makes cuts to numerous other programs, such as Native Americans and Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers.

This is a stunningly reckless choice made by Chairman Rehberg. The weight of the evidence is clear and convincing that employment and training services generate significantly higher earnings and employment rates. The Workforce Investment Act (WIA) programs funded through the Labor Department provide high-quality employment assistance, labor market information, job training and income support to Americans who are seeking employment. The success of WIA programs is measured through results: over 55% of WIA program participants—or 4.7 million individuals—were placed in jobs this past program year, despite the fact that there are more than four jobseekers for every available job. Over the two most recent years for which data is available, there was a remarkable 234 percent increase in participation in WIA programs.

This new round of cuts follows a long-term decline in workforce system funding since 1984. Years of stagnant appropriations have failed to match the growth in the workforce or keep pace with inflation. Over the past ten years, funding for workforce development programs at the Labor Department fell substantially in *actual dollar terms*—from \$5.8 billion in 2002 to \$5.0 billion in 2012. After adjustment for inflation, that's a *30 percent* loss of purchasing power, at a time when there's a great need for training to equip workers with the skills they need for the jobs of the future.

For dislocated workers in particular, federal support is 18 percent lower in today's dollars than it was in 2006, even though there are six million *more* people looking for work now. Funds used to provide basic job search services, like guidance on résumés and coaching for interviews, have fallen by 13 percent. We have also seen a breathtaking decline in the number of One-Stop Career Centers, down to 3000 today, from 3600 in 2004. National and regional staffing to support these efforts has also fallen steeply, from 1400 employees in 2001 to just 900 today.

In light of the current surge in demand for employment assistance, coupled with an historical trend of declining federal resources, these funds are needed now more than ever.