



National Coalition For Literacy

American Association for Adult and Continuing Education ◦ Adult Literacy Media Alliance ◦ American Council on Education, GED Testing Service ◦ American Institute for Research ◦ American Library Association ◦ Center for Literacy Studies, University of Tennessee ◦ Commission on Adult Basic Education ◦ Institute for the Study of Adult Literacy and the Goodling Institute for Research, Pennsylvania State University ◦ International Reading Association ◦ National Center for Family Literacy ◦ National Council of State Directors of Adult Education ◦ ProLiteracy Worldwide ◦ Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Inc. ◦ World Education

January 16, 2009

Dear Member of Congress:

As you consider the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, we encourage you to not overlook the contributions of adult education.

Although the bill, as currently drafted, provides funds for Title I of the Workforce Investment Act, it overlooks the valuable services provided through Title II, the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act.

Many of the unemployed and underemployed have one thing in common, low levels of basic skills which prevent them from obtaining work, retaining a job, or advancing their careers.

According to the National Institute for Literacy, American businesses lose more than \$60 billion in productivity each year due to employees' basic skill deficiencies. Furthermore, new and emerging jobs require advanced skills.

Statistics tell us that 43,000,000 Americans have not finished high school (US Census) and that approximately 90,000,000 adults (45% of the adult population) function below the high school level (National Assessment of Adult Literacy 2005). They also tell us that more than one million of those who lost their jobs in 2008 are low-skilled.

To put Americans back to work, we must ensure that they have the skills necessary to compete in today's technological workforce. This will take more than job training; it will take a combination of job training and education. At the present time, adult education is seriously under-funded, leaving large numbers of the population who need to access literacy programs without the services they need.

To truly be successful, we recommend that the stimulus proposal include funding for adult education to assist in preparing our nation's workers for employment. Public schools produce only 2% of the workforce annually. Ninety eight percent of the annual workforce is adults and many of them will never reach their full potential without additional education. As a result our country will not have the skilled workforce it requires to be globally competitive.

We encourage you to amend Title IX of the law to include \$500 million for adult education services to work in tandem with job training programs to ensure a skilled American workforce.

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Should you have any questions, please contact: Lynn Selmser, Public Policy Director, at 703-560-5541 or lcselmser@cox.net or Sherrie Claiborne, Coalition President at 615-269-4991 or Sherrienevilsclaiborne@hotmail.com.

Sincerely,

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Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Inc. (TESOL)
World Education
AALPD
Adult Literacy and Technology Network
Center for Applied Linguistics
The Center for the Book
Center for Law and Social Policy
Correctional Education Association
Council for Advancement of Adult Literacy
MPR Associates, Inc.
National Association for Adults with Special Learning Needs
National Center on Adult Literacy, University of Pennsylvania
Senior Service America, Inc.
Student Coalition for Action in Literacy Education (SCALE)
Voice for Adult Literacy United for Education (VALUE)