



CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, DC 20515

March 16, 2006

The Honorable Ralph Regula
Chairman
Subcommittee on Labor,
Health and Human Services, and
Education
Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable David R. Obey
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor,
Health and Human Services, and
Education
Committee on Appropriations

Dear Chairman Regula and Ranking Member Obey:

We are writing to urge you provide at least level funding for Adult Basic Education and Literacy State Grants as included in the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act.

More than 40 million adults have basic skills needs or limited proficiency in English that interfere with their ability to participate fully in work, family and community activities. Current funding levels reach only 2.8 million of these adults each year, and thousands more are on waiting lists. More than 77 percent of community-based literacy programs currently report waiting lists.

Adult education and literacy programs play a key role in the success of other federal programs, including job training and welfare reform. They also play an important role in ensuring the success of No Child Left Behind by giving parents the skills they need to support their children's education. Almost 50 percent of the adult education participants are enrolled in English as a Second Language (ESL) programs, and waiting lists are so long that many immigrants literally must wait years for an opportunity to enroll in instruction and proceed toward full citizenship. In addition, adult education helps individuals gain the skills and credentials to pursue postsecondary education—a pathway that leads out of unemployment and low-wage jobs and on to economic independence.

Adult education and literacy programs help ensure that businesses are able to meet their workforce needs. With current workers retiring and no net growth in the native-born workforce predicted over the next two decades, we must help immigrants adapt. And with the majority of our 2020 workforce already out of the K-12 system, we can't afford to waste any potential workers who are building their skills through adult education and literacy programs.

Lastly, these federal dollars leverage an important investment at the states and local level, with states and localities currently providing \$3.00 for every dollar contributed by the Federal government. Please continue this vital investment.

Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,



MICHAEL N. CASTLE
Chairman
Subcommittee on Education Reform
Committee on Education and Workforce



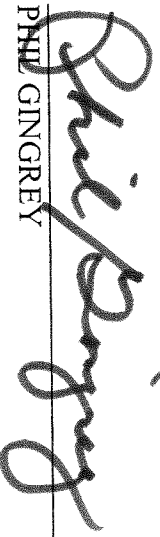
DALE E. KILDEE
Ranking Member
21st Century Competitiveness Subcommittee
Committee on Education and Workforce



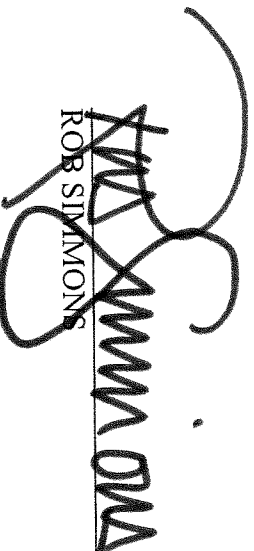
CAROLYN MCCARTHY



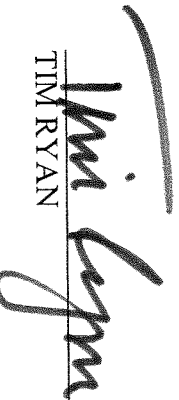
JAMES LANGEVIN



PHIL GINGREY



ROB SIMMONS



TIM RYAN



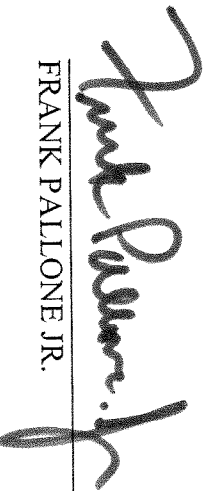
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