Letter to Congress to Support the BRIDGE for Workers Act | March 13, 2019

April 12, 2019

The National Association of State Workforce Agencies, the nonpartisan association of the 50 workforce agencies of U.S. states and three territories, issued a letter of support for the BRIDGE for Workers Act, H.R. 1759, to congressional sponsors of the bill. The bill offers a permanent statutory fix to the Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessments (RESEA) program.

The fix would ensure all unemployment insurance (UI) claimants could receive RESEA services and assessments, not just those most likely to exhaust their benefits.

Full text of the letter is below:

March 13, 2019

The Honorable Stephanie Murphy
Florida - 7th District
US House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Xochitl Torres Small
New Mexico - 2nd District
US House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jackie Walorski
Indiana - 2nd District
US House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Darin Lahood
Illinois - 18th District
US House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Murphy, Walorski, Torres Small and Lahood:

We are writing on behalf of the National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA) to endorse the BRIDGE for Workers Act and express our appreciation of your bipartisan effort to authorize the Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessments (RESEA) program as part of the Bipartisan Budget Act of2018 (P. L.115-245).

Until the passage of the Act, RESEA had been limited to a widely-successful pilot grant program. Today, States around the nation now have the ability to accelerate unemployment insurance (UI) claimants' transition back to employment faster than non-participants, which is particularly important in an economy desperately in need of skilled workers.

To enhance these efforts, we are pleased to see the proposed minor statutory fix proposed in the BRIDGE for Workers Act that reflects your intent to ensure any UI claimant, not just those most likely to exhaust their benefits, are eligible for RESEA services and assessments. The current language in Section 306 of Act needs to be modified to ensure this intent is actualized and while the Appropriations Committee made such a modification in their FY 19 Labor-HHS Appropriations bill, a permanent fix would provide clarity and stability for states actively focused on helping claimants return to work expeditiously.

NASWA is the national organization representing all 50 state workforce agencies, D.C. and U.S. territories. These agencies deliver training, employment, career, and business services, in addition to administering the unemployment insurance, veteran reemployment, and labor market information programs. NASWA provides policy expertise, shares promising state practices, and promotes state innovation and leadership in workforce development.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Jon Pierpont
Board President,
National Association of State Workforce Agencies
Executive Director,
Utah Department of Workforce Services

Scott B. Sanders
Executive Director,
National Association of State Workforce Agencies

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