Support Letter for HR 1759 to Senator Grassley

July 24, 2019

The Honorable Chuck Grassley
Chair, US Senate Committee on Finance
104 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Grassley:

We are writing on behalf of the members of the National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA) to endorse the BRIDGE for Workers Act, HR 1759.
HR 1759 provides a minor statutory fix to the Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessments (RESEA) program as passed in the Bipartisan Budget Act of2018 (P. L.115-245). Until the passage of the Bipartisan Budget Act, RESEA had been limited to a widely-successful pilot grant program. The Bipartisan Budget Act amended the Social Security Act to provide a permanent RESEA program. States around the nation now have the ability to accelerate unemployment insurance (UI) claimants' transition back to employment faster than nonparticipants, which is particularly important in an economy desperately in need of skilled workers.

To enhance these efforts. the BRIDGE [or Workers Act reflects the intent to ensure that any UI claimant, not iust those most likely to exhaust their benefits, are eligible [or RESEA services and assessments. The current language in Section 306 of the Social Security Act needs to be modified to ensure this intent is actualized. The Appropriations Committee made such a modification in their FY 19 Labor-HHS Appropriations bill, but a permanent fix is needed. HR 1759 will give states added flexibility to respond to the economic cycle and to priority labor market needs (e.g., returning veterans or workers with low educational attainment in labor markets where post-secondary skills are in demand). It will enable states to develop evidence on the strengths and weaknesses of alternative targeting strategies. And, it will provide states the

statutory clarity and stability needed to focus on helping claimants return to work expeditiously.

NASW A is the national organization representing workforce agencies in all states, the District of Columbia, 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

NASW A Board President
Executive Director,
Utah Department of Workforce Services

Scott B. Sanders
NASW A Executive Director

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