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Letter: WIB supports Tierney's proposed workforce investment act

The Salem News Mar 4, 2013



To the editor:

The North Shore Workforce Investment Board thanks Congressman John Tierney of Salem for his ongoing leadership and commitment to quality workforce services across the country and for the residents and businesses in the 6th Congressional District.

Congressman Tierney's proposal, co-authored by Reps. Ruben Hinojosa, D-Texas, and George Miller, D-Calif., and titled "the Workforce Investment Act of 2013," provides much-needed updating and modernization of the Federal Workforce Investment Act, under which we have been providing services since 1998. The proposed legislation directs WIBs and their partners to focus attention on critical industries in the region and provide targeted services that ensure a talent pipeline for companies and solid career opportunities for our job seekers. In this difficult economic environment, the need has never been greater to ensure funds are targeted, both for the job seeker and for the companies that hire them. This legislation goes a long way in ensuring that both the path to success and the funding to get there will be available for the people and companies of our region, and our country.

The NSWIB has led and/or been a part of several projects of this nature (including the GE/North Shore Community College partnership) for many years, primarily with state funding, including not only manufacturing, but financial services, health care and green training. These have proven to be solid investments, and we are very grateful for the support shown by the governor and Legislature in Massachusetts for these opportunities. People need training to get jobs; these programs provide the training to help them.

Building on these successes, the Tierney bill allows the use of federal funding to build these programs, which will result in stronger responses to industry needs and job placement opportunities.

In addition, the Tierney bill recognizes the huge challenge facing adult education in our region, where we have long and discouraging waitlists for both U.S. citizens and new immigrants who need to improve their math, reading and writing skills to get into these programs. Increased federal support is desperately needed to move this much-needed sector of our labor force into the jobs that are the backbone of our economy.

Congressman Tierney has supported efforts to help put the North Shore back to work for many, many years. In these days of political gamesmanship in Washington, D.C., his continued, undaunted commitment to this issue should serve as an example for others to follow. We thank him for this leadership and pledge our support as this bill moves through the challenging waters of congressional approval and implementation.

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