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Institute of Museum and Library Services Act (1996): Conference Proceeding 02

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AAACE & NCSDAE Conference Priorities¹

The following provisions from the "Careers Act" (House) and the "Workforce Development Act" (Senate) have emerged by consensus across all major Adult Basic Education/Literacy organizations as our top priorities for the upcoming Conference Committee which will reconcile the differences between these two bills. We firmly believe that the following results **must** be achieved by the Conferees if we are to ensure that under-educated and limited English proficient adults and their families will receive the ABE/Literacy services they need and deserve.

A. THE "CAREERS ACT"

The Senate should *recede* to the House, re, the following provisions:

- 1) Designated Adult Basic Education funding - a separate ABE/Literacy block grant.

- 2) The broad purposes of ABE/Literacy - definitions (including the more flexible definition of "State Education Agency") and purposes that reflect all dimensions of the program: family, community and economic.

- 3) National Programs / U.S. DOE - "National Programs" supported within the Office of Vocational & Adult Education.

- 4) Securing & sustaining adequate ABE/Literacy investment - a 25% match required from state and local funding.

¹ American Association for Adult & Continuing Education; National Council of State Directors of Adult Education; the National Coalition for Literacy will likely adopt these priorities at its 11/8/95 meeting.

Important provisions included in both the House and the Senate:

- ▶ Direct and equitable access.
- ▶ Designated support for the National Institute for Literacy.
- ▶ ABE director must be included in state plan development.
- ▶ Accountability and results beyond employability/"got a job"
{NOTE: missing is a process for states to come together to develop a "national data set and framework for reporting results," essential to sustain Congressional investment in the future.}
- ▶ Funding from other titles may be used to help pay ABE programs for services provided to referred students.

B. THE "WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACT"

The House should *recede* to the Senate, re, the following provisions:

- 1) ABE/Literacy is an education program - funding goes to the state educational agency.

- 2) Adequate investment in continuous improvement - a "ceiling" of 20% for professional development, technical assistance, administration, et al, is essential; designated funding for *state literacy resource centers*.

- 3) ABE/Literacy representation where policy and decisions are made - ABE/Literacy representation needs to be required on local/regional Workforce Development Boards.

- 4) Securing & sustaining adequate ABE/Literacy investment - *maintenance of effort and supplement, not supplant* provisions.

Side-By-Side Comparison Of Adult Basic Education Legislation

NCSDAE & AAACE Legislative Committees: November 1995

Eight Essential Elements for Adult Basic Education (ABE) Legislation	"Careers Act" House/Goodling H.R.1617	"Workforce Development Act" Senate/Kassebaum S.143	What The ABE Field Needs From These Bills
1. ABE related legislation must support the <u>broad purposes</u> of the program.	(✓) The Act focuses primarily on employability although the role of ABE/literacy for family literacy and "to participate in the civic, social and economic life of the U.S." is also defined and suggested. (§411)	(✓)The Act focuses on employability although the "Workforce Education" sections do include role of ABE/literacy for responsible citizenship and family literacy. (§104 & §106)	Retain strongest ABE related language from definitions and purposes (House def. of "SEA"); obtain better representation on state and regional boards that will establish priorities for services.
2. ABE is an education program, and as such, should be managed by the <u>state educational agency (SEA)</u> .	✓ABE has its own block grant (-) funding goes to the Governor who consults with other stakeholders to determine who manages the program (except in states whose laws require education \$\$ go to the SEA (perhaps 14 such states?). (§103)	Overall funding goes to the Governor ✓the SEA, however, is responsible for the 25% of the funding (planning & management) designated for "workforce education" (ABE and Vocational Education) services. (§103) (-) no guarantee for the ABE share of this \$\$	In order to assure that the broad purposes of this educational program continue to be served, the House should recede to the Senate so that ABE funding goes to the State Educational Agency.
3. Programs must be able to make serious investments in <u>program and professional development</u> .	(-) A maximum of 12% can be invested in program and professional development, technical assistance and technology initiatives; this includes any support for literacy resource centers and up to +3% for administration. (§432)	✓Professional development and technical assistance activities are allowable (§104); up to 20% of workforce education funds may be used for these and other statewide activities (5% of which is the maximum that can be used for state administration) (§111 & §114). ✓Funding for state literacy resource centers is included as part of a percentage "taken off the top" of the Act's approp. (§242 & §124).	The House should recede to the Senate in order to ensure sufficient resources for professional development and technical assistance; the Senate provision for literacy resource centers appears superior to making them only an "allowable expense" from a tiny pool of funding; the House should recede to the Senate version.
4. Meaningful and adequate <u>representation</u> of ABE stakeholders on national, state and regional boards.	(-) ABE stakeholders are <u>not</u> provided with a designated seat on regional/local workforce development boards (§106); ✓state ABE director <i>must</i> be included in state plan development (§103). {there is no state workforce development board in the House version}	✓ABE stakeholders are provided with a designated seat on local partnerships and workforce development boards (§118) ✓state ABE director <i>must</i> be included in state plan development (§101). (-) ABE stakeholders are <i>not</i> provided with a designated seat on the state workforce development board (§105).	In legislation primarily designed for "employment & training," ABE as an education program <i>must</i> be <i>at the table</i> at every level or its concerns and priorities will be overlooked and lost; the House should recede to the stipulated ABE Workforce Development Board role in the Senate bill.

Eight Essential Elements for Adult Basic Education (ABE) Legislation	"Careers Act" House/Goodling H.R.1617	"Workforce Development Act" Senate/Kassebaum S.143	What The ABE Field Needs From These Bills
<p>5. <u>Current and additional ABE investment must be leveraged through matching and maintenance of effort (MOE) requirements.</u></p>	<p>(✓) A matching share of 25% is required using state and local funding. (§433). (-) No MOE requirement. (✓) Other Title II & III funding "may" be used to help pay ABE programs for services provided to referred students (§432 & §433).</p>	<p>✓ Requires assurance that states "will supplement and not supplant" other public funds spent on "workforce development activities" and a maintenance of effort mechanism is specified (§106). No matching requirement. (✓) Funds from other set-asides "may" be used to support ABE services for adults who must attain or be enrolled in a program leading to a high school diploma/equivalent before they can enroll in other training services (§103 & §106).</p>	<p>The matching provision from the House and the maintenance effort provision in the Senate provide the strongest protection for maintaining scarce existing resources. The provisions for "funding accompanying referrals" are weak in both bills, reinforcing our need for language requiring ABE constituencies be represented on state and regional policy and oversight boards.</p>
<p>6. <u>National programs require serious support for priority concerns of the field that states alone can't address.</u></p>	<p>(✓) \$4.5 million is set aside for NIFL and \$4.5 million for the USDOE for coordination, evaluation and major developmental activities regardless of the level of appropriations for the Act (§441 & §442).</p>	<p>✓ The National Institute for Literacy (NIFL) would be funded through a percentage set aside "off the top" of the Act's appropriation (assuming many of OVAE's functions, §241). (-) The Act creates a transition period during which USDOE's OVAE and USDOL's Employment & Training Administration are phased out (by 7/1/98, §§187, 188, 191); a new government corporation, the Workforce Development Partnership is created (§181).</p>	<p>Both bills provide support for NIFL although a percentage off the top might better separate its funding from the portion going to states for services. The Senate should recede to the House with respect to the ABE role of the U.S. DOE and funding for its technical assistance (which will be needed particularly by small states establishing accountability systems) and evaluation activities.</p>
<p>7. <u>A clearly defined focus on accountability and results appropriate for ABE services.</u></p>	<p>Accountability is based primarily on economic/jobs related results and literacy gains; (✓) attainment of a H.S. diploma/equivalency (§434) for which States establish measurable goals (§433); states are "encouraged" to measure the success of family literacy programs, increased English language skills and community involvement. States must use 3% of their federal funds for performance grants to local programs starting PY 1998. (§432)</p>	<p>While the overall bill focuses on employability/getting a job, the ABE sections promote (✓) Accountability based on student mastery of the literacy, knowledge and skills needed for employment, responsible citizenship and for parents to become actively involved in the education of their children (§121).</p>	<p>Provisions for ABE related results from both bills need to be combined; even then, the combined language will be weak and could lead to an inability to demonstrate significant results in the future; the field will need to voluntarily resolve this issue by establishing a common framework for accountability and common data elements on its own!</p>
<p>8. <u>Adequate funding and support for adult basic education programs.</u></p>	<p>(✓) Block grants all existing Adult Education Act (AEA) state and local programs into a single ABE line item with an authorization level of \$280 million. (§4)</p>	<p>(✓) Consolidates 14 programs; ABE and Perkins programs are combined in a 25% set aside (§123) of the amount appropriated (with \$6+ billion total authorization, the ABE + Voc Ed "ceiling" is higher than in the house, §124).</p>	<p>Support a separate ABE block grant or a minimum ABE set-aside at the higher authorization level; to maintain the broad purposes envisioned for these funds, they must go to the SEA.</p>