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Consolidated and Reformed Workforce  
Development and Literacy Act (1976)

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## Consolidated and Reformed Workforce Development and Literacy Act (1976): Report 13

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**AT-RISK YOUTH  
Amendments and Talking Points**

- o I believe the needs of low-income, at-risk youth are being severely shortchanged in the proposed conference agreement.
  - The agreement would require that 15 percent of the block grant funds be spent on at-risk youth.
  - At the House Budget Committee mark, this translates into \$\_\_ million, a reduction of \_\_ percent from the \$1.23 billion proposed by the President in his FY 1997 Budget.
  - This represents a reduction of \_\_ percent from the FY 1996 levels.
  - Lack of targeting to out-of-school youth means this group is likely to be significantly underserved.
- o Reductions of this magnitude are simply not acceptable.
  - Youth unemployment far exceeds overall unemployment, and unemployment among at-risk youth is an even more serious problem.
  - The pervasive joblessness of at-risk youth contributes fundamentally to such problems as poverty, crime, welfare dependency, teen pregnancy, and drug abuse.
  - If we ignore this population, we will pay in other ways -- through costs of welfare, incarceration, drug treatment and the like.
- o I therefore offer amendments to better address the needs of at risk youth.
  - This target population is in danger of being significantly underserved in this legislation. We know from experience that if this group is not specifically targeted, it will not be adequately served. A number of models have been developed that have proven successful or show promise of success in serving at-risk youth.
- o My first amendment would hold harmless funding for at-risk youth, with a corresponding reduction in funds for the flex pot, where necessary. Under this amendment, States would ensure the expenditure of funds for at-risk youth that is at least equal to the amount allocated to the State for at-risk youth under JTPA in FY 95. Where the apportionment for at-risk youth activities is insufficient, the Governor would make the necessary amounts available for at-risk youth.

- o The second amendment would require that each local area use a portion of its at-risk youth funds to provide summer jobs to at-risk youth.
  - Currently, the proposed agreement would allow summer jobs as an authorized activity, but there is no requirement or assurance that these jobs will be provided.
  - Summer jobs provide critical first opportunities for low-income youth to be exposed to the world of work and obtain work experience. There is ample evidence that the summer jobs program works well. It provides hope and concrete skills to hundreds of thousands of young people.
  - The Labor Department estimates that a third of the summer jobs held by black youth and a fourth held by Hispanic youth come from the Federal summer jobs program.
  - This modest amendment will ensure that summer jobs continue to be provided -- although at a level determined by each local area.
- o The third amendment would require each local workforce development boards to establish a priority/equitable service within its at-risk youth activities to dropouts.
  - The costs to society of ignoring this population are enormous.
  - Over a lifetime the average high school dropout will earn about \$230,000 less and contribute \$70,000 less in taxes than a high school graduate.
  - Currently, over one-half of all black male high school dropouts under age 25 and three-quarters of the dropouts who are between the ages of 25 and 24 are under the criminal justice system supervision. It costs \$35,000 a year to keep a youth in a detention facility.
  - This amendment will attempt to provide resources to perhaps the most underserved group among at-risk youth.
- o The fourth amendment will increase the collaboration among local schools and the workforce development board in serving at-risk in-school and out-of-school youth.

NOTE: Amendments are attached.