Consolidated and Reformed Workforce Development and Literacy Act (1976): Correspondence 05

Peggy Taylor

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May 21, 1996

The Honorable Edward M. Kennedy
Ranking Minority Member
Labor and Human Resources Committee
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Kennedy:

The AFL-CIO is very concerned about reports that the conferees on H.R. 1617, the Workforce and Careers Development Act, will complete the conference on this complex legislation this week.

The work done by the respective committee staffs is very complex and requires detailed analysis. President Clinton has sent specific provisions that he believes must be in the final bill. We share many of his concerns including overall adequate funding. It is in the interest of getting good legislation that state and local officials, the education community, the employer community, and the labor community must be given an opportunity to comment on these changes. Any rush to complete final action on this conference report before such analysis is available is unwise. As you know it is impossible for the House and Senate, given their overwhelming floor schedules, to pass a conference report before the Memorial Day recess.

Labor unions are concerned about these issues:

1. The Wagner-Peyser Act must retain the fundamental legislative charter for our nations public labor exchange services with a separate funding stream to the local level to ensure the prudent use of employer paid federal unemployment taxes.

2. That there be a specific program with adequate funding for dislocated workers.

3. That education programs such as vocational education and school-to-work be funded adequately and administered by education officials. Additionally, there must be specific federal formula for distributing education funds within the states, based on poverty levels such as in present laws.
4. That there must sufficient funding for necessary demonstration and technical assistance programs that have proven so beneficial in the past.

5. That organized labor be an integral part of the planning process as well as state and local workforce boards which we believe should be advisory to local elected officials. Local elected officials should retain control over program funding.

Sincerely,

Peggy Taylor, Director
DEPARTMENT OF LEGISLATION

c: Democratic Conferees