

OLYMPIA J. SNOWE
MAINE

154 RUSSELL SENATE OFFICE BUILDING
(202) 224-5344

Web Site: <http://snowe.senate.gov>

DEPUTY WHIP

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1903

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The Honorable Hilda Solis
Secretary
Department of Labor
Frances Perkins Building
200 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20210

Dear Secretary Solis:

I am writing to express strong concern over the efficiency and effectiveness of federally funded job training programs.

As you well know, for the 13.9 million Americans currently out of work, as well as the millions more who are underemployed, no issue weighs more heavily than income security and learning new skills to better compete in a challenging job market. For that reason, federally funded employment and job training programs serve a critical role in our society by helping job seekers enhance their job skills, identify opportunities, and obtain employment. That being said, since the implementation of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA), a comprehensive law that developed closer coordination of employment and training programs, little has been done at the federal level to improve and reform these programs, which are now more important than ever.

Indeed, over the last year, while visiting several CareerCenters throughout my home state of Maine, I have been confronted by growing concern and frustration from both those attempting to access the resources CareerCenters have to offer, as well as those who oversee and manage these critical programs. Their concerns have centered on frustration with the efficiency of the job training programs, and the need to streamline the many services provided in order to offer better access to those who are looking for assistance. Furthermore, there is a strong feeling that there are too many barriers, in the form of duplicate programs, paperwork, and caseworkers, preventing individuals from truly taking advantage of the services job training programs have to offer.

As you also know, on February 9, 2011, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) issued a report on federal job training programs. The report, which examined the effectiveness of current policies, found that there is a great need for consolidation of the administrative structure of these programs, the co-location of services, and increased incentives for states to undertake these initiatives. Through such steps, the GAO believes that federally funded job training programs will be more cost-effective.

AUBURN
TWO GREAT FALLS PLAZA
SUITE 7B
AUBURN, ME 04210
(207) 786-2451

AUGUSTA
40 WESTERN AVENUE, SUITE 412
AUGUSTA, ME 04330
(207) 622-8292

BANGOR
202 HARLOW STREET, SUITE 214
BANGOR, ME 04401
(207) 945-0432

BIDDEFORD
227 MAIN STREET
BIDDEFORD, ME 04005
(207) 282-4144

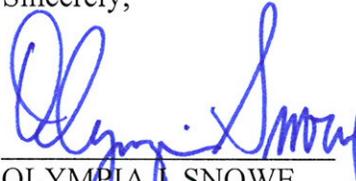
PORTLAND
3 CANAL PLAZA, SUITE 601
PORTLAND, ME 04101
(207) 874-0883
MAINE RELAY SERVICE
TDD 1-955-3323

PRESQUE ISLE
169 ACADEMY STREET, SUITE 3
PRESQUE ISLE, ME 04769
(207) 764-5124

Given the recent recommendations of the GAO, and the concerns that have been raised with me at Maine's CareerCenters, I am requesting that you provide me with detailed information on the steps that the Department of Labor intends to undertake to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of federal job training programs. Specifically, please identify any programs that you believe are duplicative of other initiatives offered either at the U.S. Department of Labor or other federal agencies, or are inefficient and can be eliminated, as well as ways to strengthen the metrics used to address the overall efficacy of your agency's job training programs. Through appropriate measures, it is my belief that federal job training programs can be improved and streamlined so as to provide greater access and service to the millions across the country who so desperately need them.

Thank you for your consideration of my views. I look forward to your response before March 16, 2011.

Sincerely,



OLYMPIA J. SNOWE
United States Senator