

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 21, 2021

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
President
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. President, Speaker Pelosi, and Majority Leader Schumer:

We write to express the urgent need to invest in workforce development in legislation to enact President Biden's Build Back Better plan. The Build Back Better plan and the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act are inextricably linked. We need workforce investments to achieve a truly inclusive economic recovery for all workers from COVID-19 that will help the U.S. compete globally.

The job loss during COVID-19 has been unprecedented, and it has disproportionately impacted low-wage workers, women, people of color, and immigrants. According to polling by the National Skills Coalition, in the height of the pandemic, 84 percent of unemployed workers wanted policymakers to immediately invest in their training and to help people get back to work in industries that were hiring. Workers of color and immigrants, and particularly women, are overrepresented in jobs hit hardest by the economic downturn, such as low-wage service sector jobs.

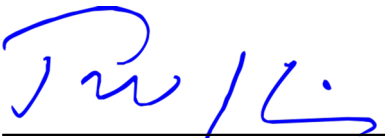
Construction, manufacturing, and infrastructure industries were facing shortages of skilled workers even before the pandemic, and demand for workers has only grown with impending infrastructure investments and as local areas are able to reinvest in capital projects previously put on hold because of the pandemic. The Build Back Better plan gives us a chance to build a workforce with the skills to match the jobs that we will create with this once-in-a-generation investment in our infrastructure.

Workers who lost their jobs—and those who were not able to access education or training opportunities prior to the crisis—need access to training provided by our public workforce and career and technical education systems to transition into new jobs. These systems offer high-quality, short-term training programs that prepare people for good jobs within their communities and respond to workers' immediate need to get back to work with businesses that are hiring.

The Build Back Better plan is a rare opportunity to deliver critical investments that we have failed to make for far too long. Workforce challenges vary across every community, and we need different tools to address the growing problems they face. But with comprehensive investments, we can grow, preserve, and strengthen our workforce and help more workers access good skills training programs and more businesses expand.

We understand there are many important priorities under consideration in the Build Back Better plan. We believe that investing in workforce development, registered apprenticeship programs, and training programs at community colleges is crucial to helping American families. As we work to create a Build Back Better package, we urge you to invest in our workforce at a scale that lives up to the commitment we made to workers and businesses across our nation. We must make these investments a central pillar of Build Back Better legislation in order to achieve an inclusive economic recovery for all.

Sincerely,



Tim Kaine
United States Senator



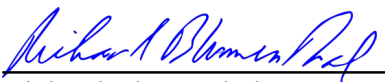
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Dianne Feinstein
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Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



Alex Padilla
United States Senator



Tina Smith
United States Senator



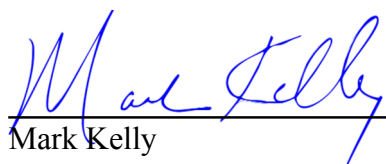
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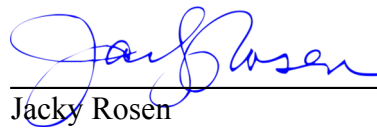
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