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March 4, 2013

Dear Friend,

Unfortunately, nearly twenty million Americans are unemployed or underemployed, and many others are hoping to change careers. On the other hand, businesses are looking to hire but are struggling to find employees with the specific skill-set their company needs. I have toured countless businesses in the Fifth Congressional District of Ohio that consistently share this story with me.

Modernization is needed to reform our country's workforce development system which is failing to provide workers and employers the support they need to compete in today's economy, despite a significant investment of taxpayer dollars. More than 50 separate employment and training programs are administered by nine different federal agencies and almost all of these programs are duplicative or overlapping, together costing approximately \$18 billion annually. Additionally, federal mandates and government inefficiencies undermine the ability of state and local leaders to meet the changing demands of their communities. Finally, onerous rules prevent individuals from immediately accessing the training they need for in-demand jobs.

After extensive hearings and oversight, the House Committee on Education and the Workforce drafted legislation to reauthorize the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 to create a more effective and accountable workforce development system. H.R. 803, the Supporting Knowledge and Investing in Lifelong Skills (SKILLS) Act was recently introduced by Representative Virginia Foxx (R-NC). The legislation includes positive and commonsense reforms that will revamp the current workforce development system by:

- Eliminating and streamlining 35 duplicative and ineffective employment and training programs.
- Replacing the current maze of programs with a flexible Workforce Investment Fund to serve as a single source of support for employers and job seekers.
- Strengthening the role of employers in workforce training decisions by repealing 19 federal mandates governing workforce investment board representation.
- Establishing common performance measures for state and local leaders and requiring an independent evaluation of programs at least once every five years to improve accountability.
- Requiring local workforce investment leaders to outline the strategies they will implement to serve at-risk youth, individuals with disabilities, veterans, and other workers with unique barriers to employment.

Workforce development is critical to revitalizing our Nation's economy, especially in northwest Ohio, which is home to a wealth of small businesses and world-class manufacturing facilities that require highly skilled workers. Furthermore, numerous high-quality community colleges serve our area with first-rate job-training curriculum. As someone who is involved in workforce development, I wanted to reach out to you about the SKILLS Act. The legislation is expected to be on the House Floor for a vote in mid-March. If you have thoughts or concerns on the legislation, would like to voice your support, or can testify to the legislation's positive impact, please feel free to reach out to me or my Senior Legislative Assistant, Bethany Goodman, at (202) 225-6405 or [bethany.goodman@mail.house.gov](mailto:bethany.goodman@mail.house.gov). I have also included a summary of the legislation with additional details, as well as two helpful info-graphics highlighting the current system, and the proposed system under the SKILLS Act.

It is my great honor to serve as your Member of Congress and it is my number one priority to represent you and the best interests of the Fifth Congressional District. Please do not hesitate to call, write, or e-mail me in the future with any of your concerns or questions. For federal-related issues, you may reach my Washington, D.C. office by phone at (202) 225-6405, or my District office at (800) 541-6446 for constituent services. I encourage you to visit my website at <http://latta.house.gov> where you can sign up for my e-newsletter and text message updates. The website also provides links to my YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, and Flickr pages, as well as my blog, all of which will help bring my work in Washington, D.C. home to you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Robert E. Latta". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Robert" being the most prominent.

Robert E. Latta  
Member of Congress

REL/bag  
Enclosure