August 18, 2003

The Honorable Judd Gregg
Chairman, Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee
United States Senate

The Honorable Edward Kennedy
United States Senate

Dear Senator Gregg and Senator Kennedy:

We, the undersigned organizations and individuals, strongly support strengthening the existing provisions in the Workforce Investment Act for displaced homemakers and individuals training for nontraditional occupations.

The Workforce Investment Act was designed to increase the employment, retention, earnings and occupational skills of America’s workers, including displaced homemakers and individuals seeking high-skill, high-wage nontraditional careers. Unfortunately, the system has not been effective in meeting its commitment to train women for today’s workforce. In 1998, Congress justified the elimination of set-asides for displaced homemakers and individuals preparing for nontraditional occupations in the Perkins Adult and Technical Education Act of 1998, by saying that these populations would be served through WIA. Yet, WIA has not fulfilled this promise.

There are more than 7 million displaced homemakers and 10 million single mothers in the United States, and 56% of the WIA participants served in PY 2000 were women. Yet, a recent survey of over 100 Local Workforce Investment Boards found that the majority made minimal use of dislocated worker funds to serve displaced homemakers.¹ In another nationwide survey of women’s employment and job training programs, more than 60% of respondents rated services for women in transition as fair or poor². Only 10 percent rated them as excellent.

Congress can fulfill WIA’s commitment to women by strengthening the language to improve services for displaced homemakers and women seeking high-skills, high-wage jobs. Specifically:

- Direct states to describe in their state plan how they will provide services to displaced homemakers and individuals training for nontraditional employment, including outreach, intake, assessments and service delivery, the development of performance measures and training of One-Stop staff.
- Provide technical assistance to One-Stop staff on serving displaced homemakers and individuals training for nontraditional jobs.

- Mandate programs preparing individuals for nontraditional jobs and programs for displaced homemakers and single parents under the required statewide activities.
- Direct Workforce Investment Boards to create a plan to effectively utilize community programs, services, and agencies that work with hard-to-serve individuals.
- Instruct One-Stops to provide needed support services to individuals with barriers to employment, if referral mechanisms have been exhausted.

We urge you to support legislation that will fulfill WIA’s commitment to women by ensuring that displaced homemakers and other women entering the workforce have access to the training they need to attain the goal of self-sufficiency. Should you have any questions about this letter, please contact Jill Miller, Executive Director at Women Work! at (202) 467-6346.

Sincerely,

Women Work! The National Network for Women’s Employment
S & S Staffing
Toni Partington, Women Work! Governing Board
Diane Wilson, Friend of Women Work!
Project for Homemakers in Arizona Seeking Employment
National Economic Development and Law Center
Carmen Carrillo, Women Work! Governing Board
A WENDI instructor
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New Connections to Work, South Georgia Technical College
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New Connections to Work, Augusta Technical College
CLP, Presbyterian Church USA
New Connections to Work
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Ogeechee Technical College
Single Parents & Displaced Homemakers Program, Kapiolani Community College
Adult Re-Entry Program
Center for New Directions at Eastern Idaho Technical College
Center for New Directions
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Access to Education and Employment, Black Hawk College
Olney Central College
Rock Valley College
Kansas Women Work!
Area Self Sufficiency & Employment Taskforce (ASSET)
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Maine Centers for Women, Work & Community
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Sheridan, AR
Rio Rico, AZ
Tucson, AZ
Tucson, AZ
Oakland, CA
Denver, CO
Cocoa, FL
Largo, FL
Titusville, FL
Americus, GA
Atlanta, GA
Atlanta, GA
Augusta, GA
LaFayette, GA
LaGrange, GA
Oakwood, GA
Statesboro, GA
Honolulu, HI
Dubuque, IA
Idaho Falls, ID
Pocatello, ID
Chicago, IL
Moline, IL
Olney, IL
Rockford, IL
Independence, KS
Independence, KS
Hudson, MA
Augusta, ME
Bangor, ME
Skowhegan, ME
Benton Harbor, MI
Focus on Women, Henry Ford Community College
Women’s Resource Center
Dearborn, MI
Heather Densmore, Friend of Women Work!
Holland, MI
Lansing Community College Women’s Resource Center
Lansing, MI
Every Woman’s Place
Muskegon, MI
Life-Work Planning Center
Mankato, MN
Meta 5 Displaced Homemaker Program
Staples, MN
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Kansas City, MO
Ozarks Technical Community College
Springfield, MO
Career Futures, Inc.
Butte, MT
Sheila Hogan, Women Work! Governing Board
Helena, MT
Career Training Institute
Helena, MT
Career Development Workforce Center, Miles Community College
Miles City, MT
Ms. Fix-It, LLC
Carrboro, NC
New Choices Displaced Homemaker Program
Grantsboro, NC
Women’s Resource Center
Greensboro, NC
Tri-County Women’s Resource Center
Mount Airy, NC
Rocky Mount Family YMCA
Rocky Mount, NC
Community Humanitarian Resource Center
Grand Island, NE
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Lincoln, NE
Rebecca Hasty, Women Work! Member
Lincoln, NE
Job Outfitters program of the YWCA Lincoln
Lincoln, NE
YWCA of Lincoln
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McCook, NE
New Beginnings, Northeast Community College
Norfolk, NE
Metropolitan Community College, Single Parent Homemaker Services
Omaha, NE
Nebraska Commission on the Status of Women
Omaha, NE
New Hampshire Commission on the Status of Women
Concord, NH
New Hampshire Community Technical College
Nashua, NH
Welfare to Work, Rockingham Community Action
Portsmouth, NH
Career & Life Counseling Center, Displaced Homemaker Program
Hackensack, NJ
The Displaced Homemakers Network of NJ, Inc.
Jamesburg, NJ
Women's Opportunity Center
Mt. Laurel, NJ
Center for People in Transition
Sewell, NJ
TMCC Re-Entry Center, Truckee Meadows Community College
Reno, NV
Two Year College Development Center, University at Albany
Albany, NY
Economic Opportunity Commission of Nassau County, Inc.
Hempstead, NY
Schenectady Community Action Program, Project LIFT
Johnstown, NY
Florence Koenig, Friend of Women Work!
Rochester, NY
The Women’s Employment & Resource Center, Inc.
Utica, NY
Southern State Community College’s "Your Place" Program
Hillsboro, OH
Women's Center at Lakeland Community College
Kirtland, OH
People Called Women
Toledo, OH
Mt. Hood Community College
Gresham, OR
New Directions
Portland, OR
Portland Community College
Portland, OR
New Choices/New Options, Greater Altoona Career & Tech Center
Altoona, PA
New Choices/New Options
Blue Bell, PA
New Choices/New Options
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National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity
Cochranville, PA
Bucks County Opportunity Council
Doylesville, PA
New Choices / New Options Career Development Services
Erie, PA
Potter County Education Council
Galeton, PA
Formerly of New Choices / New Options
Indiana, PA
Carbon County New Choices/New Options program
Jim Thorpe, PA
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Lancaster, PA
New Choices/New Options Venango County
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CCAC New Choices/New Options
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Pennsylvania Women Work!
Pittsburgh, PA
Wings of Success
West Chester, PA
New Choices/New Options
York, PA
McAuley Village
Providence, RI
South Carolina Women Work!
Columbia, SC
Center for Adult Learners & Job Training, Midlands Technical College
Columbia, SC
Education Associate for Gender Equity/Special Populations
Columbia, SC
The Right Turn, Inc.
Pierre, SD
Roberta Dill, Friend of Women Work!
Sioux Falls, SD
Southeast Technical Institute
Sioux Falls, SD
South Dakota Women Work!
Sioux Falls, SD
South Dakota Association of Employment and Career Counselors
Sioux Falls, SD
Wheels to Work
Sioux Falls, SD
Tennessee Women Work!
Memphis, TN
Joseph Nelson, Friend of Women Work!
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Grace Durham, Friend of Women Work!
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Fredrick Durham, Friend of Women Work!
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YWCA of Greater Memphis
Memphis, TN
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Lubbock, TX
Mary Denson, Women Work! Member
Vidor, TX
Betsy Dill, Women Work! Member
Centreville, VA
Center for Education for Independence, Dabney S. Lancaster Community College
Clifton Forge, VA
Trish Perry, Friend of Women Work!
Leesburg, VA
Northern New England Tradeswomen, Inc.
Essex Junction, VT
Turning Point, Displaced Homemaker Program, Whatcom Community College
Bellingham, WA
YWCA
Everett, WA
Women's Educational Bureau, Fox Valley Technical College
Appleton, WI
Interfaith Older Adult Programs
Milwaukee, WI
West Virginia Women Work!
Morgantown, WV
Cc: The Honorable Lamar Alexander
    The Honorable Jeff Bingaman
    The Honorable Christopher Bond
    The Honorable Hillary Clinton
    The Honorable Mike DeWine
    The Honorable Christopher Dodd
    The Honorable John Edwards
    The Honorable John Ensign
    The Honorable Mike Enzi
    The Honorable Bill Frist
    The Honorable Lindsey Graham
    The Honorable Tom Harkin
    The Honorable James Jeffords
    The Honorable Barbara Mikulski
    The Honorable Patty Murray
    The Honorable Jack Reed
    The Honorable Pat Roberts
    The Honorable Jeff Sessions
    The Honorable John Warner