

November 6, 2006

The Honorable Ralph Regula  
Chairman  
Appropriations Subcommittee on  
Labor, Health and Human Services,  
Education, and Related Agencies  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington DC 20510

The Honorable David Obey  
Ranking Member  
Appropriations Subcommittee on  
Labor, Health and Human Services,  
Education, and Related Agencies  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Regula and Ranking Member Obey,

We are writing to urge you to restore funding for the Department of Labor Women's Bureau in the final Labor-HHS-Education conference report. As you know, the Senate committee-passed Labor-HHS-Education bill proposed funding the Women's Bureau at \$10 million for FY2007. This increase would restore funding to FY2002 levels and recognize the important role that women workers play in sustaining American families and the economy.

The Women's Bureau – the only federal agency devoted exclusively to the concerns of women in the labor force – has represented and protected the needs of wage-earning women since 1920. In recent years, the Bureau has advanced 21<sup>st</sup> century solutions to help women in economic transition obtain employment in high-growth, demand-driven occupations and take steps to improve their families' security and well-being.

As our country continues to move more women from welfare to work, these solutions are greatly needed. According to recent Census data, there are 7.3 million displaced homemakers and 13.6 million single mothers living in the United States: up 44% from 1994. These women face complex challenges that must be addressed as they strive to enter, re-enter and advance in the workforce.

We, the undersigned, represent community colleges, YWCAs, Community Action Programs, faith-based organizations, and independent community based organizations. Together we constitute an extensive service delivery network, reaching women in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Through its grant with the Women Work! program, the Women's Bureau provides critical training and technical assistance to our programs and nearly 1,000 additional local programs across the United States. As a direct result of this support, our programs help an estimated 300,000 women in transition each year to gain and retain employment.

The economic downturn of the last several years has created a situation in which our programs are struggling to meet a need that has grown larger, with resources that have diminished – state budgets have decreased while the number of women in poverty continues to rise each year. As a result, the resources and training Women Work! provides through the support of the Women's Bureau are more critical to our programs now than ever.

We understand that Congress will face difficult appropriations decisions this year; we ask only that you appropriate funds necessary to sustain current Women's Bureau services – including the Women Work! program. Funding the Women's Bureau at \$10 million would ensure that the Women's Bureau can continue to support Women Work! and many other national and local programs that significantly impact the lives of women and their families. We urge you to help keep women and America working by restoring the Women's Bureau's budget to \$10 million for FY2007.

Sincerely,

cc:  
Representative Ernest J. Istook, Jr.  
Representative Roger F. Wicker

Representative Anne Northup  
Representative Kay Granger  
Representative John E. Peterson  
Representative Don Sherwood  
Representative Dave Weldon  
Representative James Walsh  
Representative Michael K. Simpson  
Representative Steny H. Hoyer  
Representative Nita M. Lowey  
Representative Rosa L. DeLauro  
Representative Jesse L. Jackson  
Representative Patrick J. Kennedy  
Representative Lucille Roybal-Allard