



April 4, 2024

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
Democratic Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Johnson and Leader Jeffries:

AARP, which advocates for the more than 100 million Americans age 50 and older, writes in support of H.R. 6655, A Stronger Workforce for America Act. This bipartisan legislation modernizes the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) programs to better align with the current labor market while strengthening accountability to ensure the programs provide adequate job training and career services to help older job seekers.

In a tight labor market, older job seekers continue to face long-term unemployment at a greater rate than their younger counterparts. The Bureau of Labor Statistics' employment data for February 2024 finds that 24.9 percent of job seekers age 55 and older were long-term unemployed compared to 17.2 percent of those ages 16 to 54. The WIOA programs are essential for helping these older job seekers remain in the workforce, which helps their long-term financial security.

H.R. 6655 provides greater flexibility in designing job training for older workers that considers their existing skills and past work experience. It offers training and resources to encourage entrepreneurship and nontraditional employment, which is especially attractive to many older workers interested in options beyond traditional wage and salaried positions. As work requirements continue to change and the use of technology increases in the workforce, we are pleased this bill provides training in digital literacy and information technology for older workers. Additionally, increasing accountability through performance reporting based on race, ethnicity, sex, and age will help determine if the WIOA programs are adequately assisting older individuals who want to re-enter or remain in the workforce.

AARP urges Congress to pass H.R. 6655, A Stronger Workforce for America Act, as it will strengthen our nation's workforce by providing older workers with the assistance they need to continue working, improving their financial security. If you have questions, please feel free to contact me or have your staff contact Holly Biglow on our Government Affairs team at hbiglow@aarp.org or (202) 570-3760.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in purple ink that reads "Bill Sweeney". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Bill" and last name "Sweeney" clearly legible.

Bill Sweeney
Senior Vice President
Government Affairs

