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December 11, 2023

The Honorable Virginia Foxx
Committee on Education and the Workforce
U.S. House of Representatives
2176 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Robert C. "Bobby" Scott
Committee on Education and the Workforce
U.S. House of Representatives
2101 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Foxx and Ranking Member Scott:

LinkedIn is pleased to support H.R. 6655, A Stronger Workforce for America Act, and applauds your bipartisan commitment to strengthen the value and impact of programs currently authorized under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).

We are particularly pleased the legislation puts a skills-first approach at the forefront of workforce development systems. Current methods of finding talent often exclude large swaths of talent: workers who may have the capabilities that businesses are looking for, but don't have traditionally accepted experience or credentials. A skills-first approach increases opportunities for workers in the U.S. while ensuring critical parts of our economy are staffed. Skills-first hiring could lead to a nearly 20-times increase in qualified candidates here in the U.S., where nearly 70% of jobs require a bachelor's degree but only 37% of the workforce have one. We explored this approach in detail in our April report Skills-First: Reimagining the Labor Market and Breaking Down Barriers, and within the testimony of our Chief Economist, Dr. Karin Kimbrough, at the House Education and Workforce Committee's hearing on "Competencies Over Degrees: Transitioning to a Skills-Based Economy" in June.

We're proud to have recommended a number of provisions in our work with the Committee that can expand talent pools and get more Americans to work. Specifically, this includes language to allow both State and local funds to be used to carry out technical assistance for the use and validation of employment assessments as well as the creation of skills-based job descriptions. This support, which may be provided through a variety of intermediaries, is critical to help employers who are often interested in implementing skills-based hiring but do not have the tools and resources to do so.

LinkedIn is also a strong supporter of leveraging the skill assessments currently required under WIOA. We are pleased to see the expansion of career services to support competency-based assessments that leverage prior work experience, military service, and education to accelerate time to employment. Furthermore, we support funds being used by States (including in partnership with other States) for the development and implementation of new skill assessments.

We are excited to see that the majority of funds will go toward individual training accounts and employer-driven training, alongside increases to the current caps on incumbent worker training for new streams of funding at the State and local levels, which will support employer-driven upskilling.

Finally, we have advocated for sector partnerships in carrying out work-based learning opportunities, which are also included in the bill. This provides new opportunities for the creation of a fund to support performance-based payments to employers and sector partnerships, to support new or existing employees in upleveling skills for in-demand industries and occupations.

A Stronger Workforce for America Act is a significant step forward to transform how we prepare the U.S. workforce for the jobs of the future and more efficiently and equitably match talent to opportunity.

We applaud your bipartisanship on this issue and look forward to continuing our work with you to advance this legislation.

Sincerely,

Blake Lawit
Senior Vice President and General Counsel