



March 5, 2013

The Honorable John Kline
Chairman
Committee on Education & the Workforce
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Kline,

On behalf of the National Retail Federation (NRF), I would like to express our support and appreciation for the work the Committee is doing to address job training. H.R. 803, the Supporting Knowledge and Investing in Lifelong Skills (SKILLS) Act, introduced by Representative Foxx will provide more flexibility in how workforce training is conducted and would strengthen the role of employers in the system.

As the world's largest retail trade association and the voice of retail worldwide, NRF represents retailers of all types and sizes, including chain restaurants and industry partners, from the United States and more than 45 countries abroad. Retailers operate more than 3.6 million U.S. establishments that support one in four U.S. jobs – 42 million working Americans. Contributing \$2.5 trillion to annual GDP, retail is a daily barometer for the nation's economy. NRF's [Retail Means Jobs](#) campaign emphasizes the economic importance of retail and encourages policymakers to support a [Jobs, Innovation and Consumer Value Agenda](#) aimed at boosting economic growth and job creation.

The SKILLS Act seeks to streamline workforce development programs to better serve those seeking help through the various training programs. By “implementing innovative programs and strategies deemed to meet the needs of all employers,” the legislation in turn helps those seeking work. Understanding what the actual employers need in various areas of the country ensures training can be adapted to the local demands. As a result, jobs can be filled.

One way in which the SKILLS Act would accomplish this is by increasing employer involvement in the local training boards. Building on this, the legislation would require that common performance measures be used by state and local authorities. In addition, there is a goal to increase collaboration with the community colleges so that they provide training for local area job skills.

NRF is supportive of the Chairman's effort to move this bill forward. Streamlining workforce training programs increases efficiency, creates accountability, and improves actual training. All of these reforms are important as our country strives to re-build our economy.

Sincerely,

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