

ALA American Library Association

April 5, 2024

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
Democratic Leader
U.S. House of Representatives

Re: H.R. 6655, A Stronger Workforce for America Act – SUPPORT

Dear Speaker Johnson and Leader Jeffries,

The American Library Association (ALA) supports House passage of H.R. 6655, A Stronger Workforce for America Act. We commend Chairwoman Foxx and Ranking Member Scott for their bipartisan leadership in developing this legislation.

H.R. 6655 would reauthorize the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). The bill recognizes the role that libraries play in workforce development and strengthens the integration of libraries in the workforce ecosystem. In particular, the bill adds public libraries as entities eligible to operate a one-stop center, specifies that public libraries are among service providers that can receive a contract through the one-stop delivery system to provide career services as approved by the local board, and supports services to help workers attain digital literacy skills.

America's libraries have long served local communities as trusted and accessible front doors to gain new skills and find their next job. Libraries combine an expansive reach of accessible technology-rich locations; welcoming staff trained to provide access to the most relevant resources for people of all stages of educational and employment readiness; robust learning and employment resources; and sustained and flexible collaboration with workforce partners. Further integrating and investing in libraries as part of the workforce ecosystem will benefit many types of workers and job seekers, and will complement and strengthen workforce networks.

As this bill progresses through the legislative process, ALA will continue to seek further improvements to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the workforce system, by utilizing libraries to an even greater extent. These improvements include leveraging the free and open access to career services provided by public libraries, as well as incorporating additional library-related provisions from the bipartisan Adult Education WORKS Act (S. 3075/H.R. 5987).

We urge Members to vote “yes” on passage of H.R. 6655 and to continue working together to ensure libraries can help more Americans gain the skills to fill in-demand jobs, support their families, and strengthen the economy.

Thank you for your consideration. If we can provide more information, please contact Gavin Baker (gbaker@alawash.org).

Sincerely,



Alan S. Inouye, Ph.D.
Senior Director, Public Policy & Government Relations and Interim Associate Executive Director
American Library Association

cc: The Honorable Virginia Foxx, Chairwoman, Committee on Education and the Workforce
The Honorable Bobby Scott, Ranking Member, Committee on Education and the Workforce

The American Library Association (“ALA”) is the foremost national organization providing resources to inspire library and information professionals to transform their communities through essential programs and services. For more than 140 years, the ALA has been the trusted voice for academic, public, school, government and special libraries, advocating for the profession and the library’s role in enhancing learning and ensuring access to information for all.