March 1, 2022

The Honorable Robert C. Scott, Chairman Committee on Education and Labor 2176 Rayburn House Office Building Washington, DC 20515 The Honorable Virginia Foxx, Ranking Member Committee on Education and Labor 2101 Rayburn House Office Building Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Scott and Ranking Member Foxx,

I write today to express my support for the continuation of the Wagner-Peyser state demonstration status in the reauthorization of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).

As you know, the current Wagner-Peyser program allows states the ability to choose the most effective method to strengthen the workforce system, help get Americans into high-quality jobs, and help employers hire and retain skilled workers as outlined in WIOA. For the last fourteen years, Colorado has given counties the authority to use their discretion for allocating these funds. This current system has allowed the diverse state of Colorado to use Wagner-Peyser funding to better serve community workforce needs.

Colorado has been a leader in innovation and effective delivery of workforce services. Since being declared a demonstration state, Colorado has met all the performance outcomes outlined in WIOA. Colorado's success with its state determination status has inspired other states like Texas and Florida who are looking to change their current demonstration status to mirror Colorado's success.

For example, Mesa County in Colorado used \$880,635 in Wagner-Peyser and state funding to manage a Workforce Center that helps serve community members looking for work and partnered with Veteran Services Offices to help veterans with their transition into the civilian workforce. Mesa County's Workforce Center offers invaluable services to employers and job seekers by understanding the unique needs of their workforce and economy. In Project Year 2019, 7,938 job seekers were able to secure employment within six months of contacting the Workforce Center. If the Wagner Peyser program was no longer able to operate as a demonstration model it would make it much more difficult for local counties to adapt to current economic conditions. This would directly result in fewer job seekers gaining employment and employers struggling to fill jobs with qualified staff.

The Wagner-Peyser state designation status respects the principle, supported by colleagues on both sides of the aisle, of subsidiarity, and understands that those closest to problems often have greater ability to solve them. Reversing course, in favor of a top-down, one-size-fits-all funding model would not adequately solve regional workforce issues and threatens the successes achieved to date. Moving to a funding model which lacks proven success would be a mismanagement of taxpayer dollars. It would also be extremely costly for states that currently rely on the demonstration status. In Colorado alone, this decision would result in \$3 million in transition costs, with ongoing annual staffing costs predicted to increase by 17.14 percent.

As you are considering WIOA reauthorization, I ask for your support in retaining Colorado's Wagner-Peyser demonstration state status. Under Wagner-Peyser, Colorado has demonstrated success and it respects the federalism envisioned at our Founding. Please allow our local communities to continue to deliver innovation and excellence in workforce service.

Sincerely,

Lauren Boebert Member of Congress