

COALITION LETTER IN SUPPORT OF HB 2195/SB 1470

Tuesday, January 24, 2023

On behalf of the undersigned coalition of industry, business, and workforce leaders in the Commonwealth, we write to express our support for HB 2195 and SB 1470, which will consolidate Virginia's fragmented and siloed workforce development programs that currently sit across 13 agencies and six secretariats, under one new agency. By adopting the Workforce Development Transformation legislation, the Commonwealth has the unique opportunity to improve the delivery of its workforce development services, up-skill and re-skill job-seekers, and prepare its workforce for the jobs of today—and tomorrow.

The Commonwealth is facing unprecedented critical workforce shortages across many sectors and regions. While many workforce development programs provide a great service, the system as a whole is a set of channels with limited connectivity, creating a fragmented system that limits the potential future prosperity and opportunity for both Virginians and the businesses that drive the Commonwealth's economic vitality. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, 120K fewer Virginians are participating in the Commonwealth's labor force compared to pre-pandemic levels, with a labor force participation rate of 63.6% overall in Virginia.¹

Combining many of these programs under a single agency will optimize workforce readiness for Virginia's current and future jobs. The proposed creation of the Virginia Department of Workforce Development and Advancement (VDWDA) will provide:

- More efficient program delivery and increased workforce participation, fostering greater business investment, and, ultimately, a stronger economy for all Virginians;
- Data-driven insights that will improve the delivery of skill-building and workforce preparedness services through leveraging innovative data gathering and analyze best practices;
- A centralized strategy balanced with regional flexibility, ensuring programs and services remain consistent with the needs of regions across Virginia;
- Program development that better aligns with the needs of businesses and the ability to scale programs that work; and
- A set of measures and metrics focused on jobs filled and people retained in the workforce, with greater accountability of the results.

The time to make a lasting investment in Virginia's long-term economic growth and workforce development is now.

Sincerely,

AccuTec
American Recyclable Plastic Bag Alliance
Arlington Chamber of Commerce
Associated Builders and Contractors of Virginia

Associated General Contractors of Virginia, Inc.
CGI
ChamberRVA
Chesapeake Regional Healthcare



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Cisco Networking Academy
 Delmarva Chicken Association
 Genedge
 Greater Augusta Regional Chamber of Commerce
 Greater Washington Partnership
 Heavy Construction Contractors Association
 Home Builders Association of Virginia
 Louisa County Chamber of Commerce
 Lynchburg Regional Business Alliance
 Mark A. Herzog, Former Chair, Virginia Board of Workforce Development
 Newport News Shipbuilding- Huntington Ingalls Industries
 National Federation of Independent Business
 Northern Virginia Chamber of Commerce
 Northern Virginia Technology Council
 Precast Concrete Association of Virginia
 Prince William Chamber of Commerce
 Richmond Area Municipal Contractors Association
 Roanoke-Blacksburg Technology Council
 rvatech - Richmond Technology Council
 Thomas Jefferson Institute
 Virginia Agribusiness Council
 Virginia Asian Chamber of Commerce
 Virginia Assisted Living Association

Virginia Association for Home Care and Hospice
 Virginia Association of Roofing Professionals
 Virginia Association of Surveyors
 Virginia Automatic Merchandising Association
 Virginia Aviation Business Association
 Virginia Beer Wholesalers Association
 Virginia Chamber of Commerce
 Virginia Food Industry Association
 Virginia Funeral Directors Association
 Virginia Hispanic Chamber
 Virginia Hospital and Healthcare Association
 Virginia Manufactured and Modular Housing Association
 Virginia Manufacturers Association
 Virginia Poultry Federation
 Virginia REALTORS®
 Virginia Restaurant, Lodging & Travel Association
 Virginia Retail Federation
 Virginia Transportation Construction Alliance
 Virginia Trucking Association
 Virginia Wholesalers and Distributors Association
 Washington Gas



LYNCHBURG REGIONAL BUSINESS ALLIANCE
 Chamber and Economic Development



¹<https://www.vec.virginia.gov/sites/default/files/news-15678-Employment%20Newsletter-November2022.pdf>

