



May 16, 2022

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
1236 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Republican Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
2468 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Leader McCarthy:

On behalf of our nearly 38 million members and all Americans age 50 and older, AARP writes in **support of H.R. 7309**, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2022 (WIOA). This reauthorization bill will strengthen the federal workforce development system and address misperceptions of age and assist older job seekers with training and job placement.

AARP believes all Americans, including older workers who want or need to work, should be able to work. The programs under WIOA are essential to helping older jobseekers remain in the workforce. As the labor market endures prolonged tightening, AARP continues to hear from older adults who want to return to work but need assistance with reskilling and job placement. According to a May 2021 [AARP survey](#), about two-thirds of older workers are interested in job or skills training. WIOA makes investments and improvements to job training, career navigation, and job placement services. These investments will help older individuals that are unemployed or underemployed reconnect with a changing labor market and help employers maintain a skilled and diverse workforce.

Older job seekers continue to experience long-term unemployment at a much higher rate than younger job seekers. The April 2022 jobs report showed that 36.2 percent of job seekers ages 55 and older were long-term unemployed compared to 23.4 percent of those ages 16 to 54. This bill will assist older long-term unemployed individuals by including unemployed individuals for 27 weeks or more in the definition of “dislocated worker” and by having older individuals in the definition of “individuals with barriers to employment.”

This WIOA reauthorization bill will better serve older workers by ensuring that the one-stop delivery systems continue to provide direct services and not move to self-serve computer terminals that older individuals use the least. The bill will also invest in programs to ensure the workforce development board and staff are trained on gender, race, and age biases. WIOA will also expand job options to include flexible work arrangements, such as self-employment, that are especially attractive to many older

workers interested in options beyond traditional wage and salaried positions with employers.

As work requirements continue to change and the use of technology increases in the workforce, we are pleased that WIOA also will provide training in digital literacy and information technology.

AARP strongly urges Congress to pass the WIOA reauthorization bill that will enhance our nation's workforce program and provide older workers with the assistance needed to continue working. If you have questions, please feel free to contact me or have your staff contact Holly Biglow on our Government Affairs team at hbiglow@aarp.org or (202) 570-3760.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in purple ink that reads "Bill Sweeney". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Bill" and last name "Sweeney" clearly distinguishable.

Bill Sweeney
Senior Vice President
Government Affairs