

April 16, 2020

Members of the House Jobs & Economic Development Finance Division:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony relating to the future of workforce development.

The Minnesota Business Partnership champions efforts that will result in Minnesota's workforce being among the best and most prepared for careers in the global economy, both in the short-term as we navigate the COVID crisis and as we look ahead to post-COVID recovery and resumed economic growth.

In response to the COVID outbreak's impact on the state's job market, the Minnesota Business Partnership is currently focused on several key workforce development priorities: filling short-term hiring needs, retraining workers for essential jobs, and planning for re-employment.

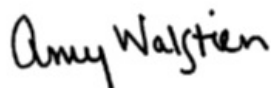
Innovative education and training programs linked to employment will be key to filling jobs, retraining, and re-employing Minnesotans. Training programs that upskill workers for in-demand jobs will be more important than ever. For example, the IT and skilled work training programs that Summit Academy OIC has created in partnership with employers like Atomic Data and Design Ready Controls pair classroom learning with on-the-job training and result in employment. Innovative solutions like this, that not only train workers but also provide them with great jobs, will help Minnesotans get back to work and regrow our state's economy.

We also see the Future of Work on the horizon. The rapid pace of technological change will continue to spark innovation throughout our economy, as new jobs and skill requirements are emerging. Training programs that are flexible and agile will be critical to meeting the evolving needs of employers and workers in this new paradigm.

Equally important will be strengthening public-private partnerships between businesses and training providers to ensure that workers are equipped with the skills needed for the future of Minnesota's economy. Minnesota employers have been more engaged than ever in programs to educate and train Minnesotans for emerging careers. For example, Red Wing Shoes has worked with local schools and other partners to develop a Youth Skills Training Program that provides students with exposure to manufacturing and engineering careers. These types of training programs will continue to be very important to developing skills for the Future of Work.

The Minnesota Business Partnership believes the future of workforce development should be focused on strengthening workforce programs that are deeply connected to employers, pair training with employment, and are innovative and agile in developing skills training responsive to employer's needs. These programs will be important to the post-COVID recovery as well as preparing Minnesotans for the Future of Work.

Sincerely,



Amy Walstien
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