

July 15, 2011

Dear Senator:

As Congress and the Administration work to reduce debt and the deficit, Goodwill urges Congress to maintain its investment in programs that help people to find jobs and advance in their careers.

In 2010, local Goodwill agencies raised more than \$4 billion in its retail stores and other social enterprises and invested 84 percent of its privately-raised revenues to supplement federal investments in programs that give people the skills they need to reenter the workforce. In fact, Goodwill's collective investment in these services eclipsed the Department of Labor's combined investment in the Workforce Investment Act's adult, youth, and dislocated workers.


Now more than ever, with unemployment remaining close to the highest levels experienced in a generation, local Goodwill agencies are on the front lines of the fragile recovery assisting people, including individuals with disabilities; youth; adults; dislocated workers; older workers; veterans; people with a criminal background; and Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) recipients, who are struggling to find, keep, and advance in jobs during a stubbornly tight job market. Goodwill provided job training, employment services, and supportive services to nearly 2.5 million people, placing more than 170,000 people in jobs and employing 97,000. In addition, more than 155,000 people were referred to Goodwill for help through through the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) and state Vocational Rehabilitation agencies. Goodwill urges Congress to maintain funding for programs that increase employment opportunities and support people, such as those listed above.

Goodwill continues to hear employers express that it remains difficult to find workers that have the skills employers seek. In response Goodwill launched the Community College/Career Collaboration (C⁴) in 2009 to enhance local agencies' collaboration with community colleges to combine their assets and resources to provide easy access to education, job training and other supportive services to individuals who lack a college or career credential that employers look for. Pell grants are an important component of C⁴ because they increase access to training and education that lead to high-growth and good paying jobs that sustain families and build vibrant communities. Therefore the importance of Pell grants has increased dramatically for Goodwill.

Goodwill Industries understands the difficult challenge decision makers face as they struggle to reduce the deficit and limit the national debt, while stretching limited resources to support an ever-increasing list of national priorities. Reducing debt and the deficit is a serious issue that will require all to make sacrifices to address the nation's spending problem. Tackling this serious issue also calls for wise investments in integrated strategies that will address our nation's revenue problem by making our workforce and businesses more competitive.

Goodwill thanks you for considering its priorities, and looks forward to working with you to help government meet the serious challenges our nation faces. Please feel free to contact me at seth.turner@goodwill.org or (240) 333-5508.

Sincerely,



Seth Turner
Senior Director of Government Affairs and Public Policy