



To: Senator Todd Young  
185 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Young:

The members of Indiana's Skills2Compete Coalition were thrilled to see your support of continuing the Affordable Connectivity Program. In light of [recent research](#) correlating improved digital skills to increased adoption of broadband through the Affordable Connectivity Program, **we urge you to co-lead essential legislation known as the *21st Century Workforce Act*, to champion digital skills for the workforce and economy of Hoosiers.**

Since 2010, Indiana's Skills2Compete convenes bipartisan workforce stakeholders from across the great state of Indiana including businesses, chambers of commerce, institutions of higher education, labor representatives, members of the Indiana General Assembly, and community-based organizations in tandem with National Skills Coalition, with the aim of developing a skilled workforce and serving as a resource for policymakers working toward that end.

In today's economy, [89% of jobs in Indiana require digital](#) skills, across every industry and in almost every occupation, and this especially impacts the majority of jobs in Indiana that require more than a high school degree but not a college degree. Workers that qualify for jobs that require even *one* digital skill can earn an average of 23 percent more than in a job requiring no digital skills, yet [1 in 3 workers do not have even the foundational digital skills necessary](#) to enter and thrive in today's jobs, and these statistics are magnified for historically marginalized populations, like people of color.

These challenges are acute for Indiana's businesses. A [2022 survey](#) from the Indiana Chamber of Commerce found that 83% of businesses struggle to meet their talent needs, with a skills mismatch being a primary driver. Investments in digital skills could help employers train and hire the workforce they need to thrive. As a result, Indiana workers face challenges in building the digital skills they need to enter and succeed in the labor market, and Indiana businesses cannot hire or retain the skilled workers they need.

A crucial component of ensuring that workers can access digital skill-building opportunities is

creating capacity within the workforce development system, so that workers who have lost their jobs can access the digital skills they need to rejoin our workforce, and enter in-demand careers. Further, workers who are *already* on-the-job need to be equipped with upskilling opportunities to learn more digital skills and increase their earnings. For the economy as a whole, these increased earnings would generate more state and federal tax revenue, ranging from \$1,840 to \$3,680 in additional tax revenue per Indiana household per year. For businesses, turnover costs (estimated at \$25,000 when a worker quits within the first year to over \$78,000 after five years) can be averted or delayed by ensuring that workers have access to digital upskilling opportunities.

**Your leadership in responding to these challenges is crucial. Will you consider becoming the co-lead of the proposed 21st Century Workforce Act?** This legislation would create formula funding and competitive grants for states and eligible institutions to develop digital skills training programs for workers who have lost their jobs, and for workers who are already on the job to further their career pathways, and for businesses to see more profit and success. We know you are a strong supporter of the Affordable Connectivity Program to help more Hoosiers access the Internet, and if more Hoosiers had strong digital skills, more would be able to access ACP. We believe this bill will be a strong continuation of your dedication to Indiana's workforce and your support of Hoosiers' digital access.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Erin Macey, Director, **Indiana Community Action Poverty Institute**

Peggy Frame, Executive Director, **Southeast Community Services**

Hannah Carlock, Senior Director of Public Affairs, **The Arc of Indiana**

Jason Bearce, Vice President, Education and Workforce Development, **Indiana Chamber of Commerce**

Ruba Marshood, CEO, **Indy Reads**

Samuel Snideman, Vice President of Government Relations, **United Way of Central Indiana**

Kathryn Clayton, Executive Director, **Labor Institute for Training**

Paul Sammons, Director of Strategic Collaboration, & Peggy Sammons, Training Coordinator, **RecycleForce**

Marie Mackintosh, President & CEO, **EmployIndy**

Taylor Hughes, Vice President of Policy & Strategy, **Indy Chamber**