

**Testimony before the House Committee on Ways and Means
In Support of SB 509 – Scholarships and Grants**

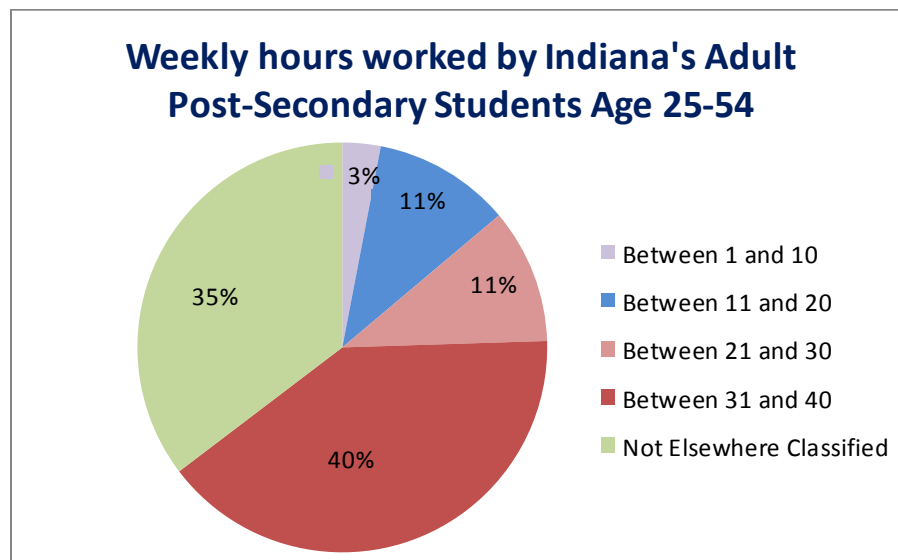
Given by Andrew Bradley, Senior Policy Analyst, Indiana Institute for Working Families
March 16, 2015

Good Morning Mr. Chairman and members of the committee,

My name is Andrew Bradley, I'm representing the Indiana Institute for Working Families, a non-partisan research and advocacy group that provides data, research analysis, and staffing to the Indiana Skills2Compete Coalition, a broad-based group of policymakers, workforce trainers, and community members committed to increasing the number of Hoosiers with in-demand 'middle-skill' credentials.

Thank you for hearing this bill today, and thanks to Reps. Clere and Truitt for co-sponsoring it in the House. We also thank Sen. Charbonneau for authoring the bill and appreciate all the hard work and commitment that the Commission for Higher Education and Commissioner Lubbers have given to serving Indiana's adult students.

SB 509 will better align state resources for the nearly 1/3 of Indiana's working-age adults with no post-secondary education, as well as those with some college but no degree. The bill will help focus state resources for the adult and financially independent students who combined to make up over 36 percent of Indiana's post-secondary population in the 2013-2014 school year.¹ The bill also takes a needed step to provide additional assistance for the majority of Indiana's adult students who must work more than part-time while going to school, whether as a part-time or full-time student. This amendment will help these students complete their degree and move into a high-demand, high-wage job.



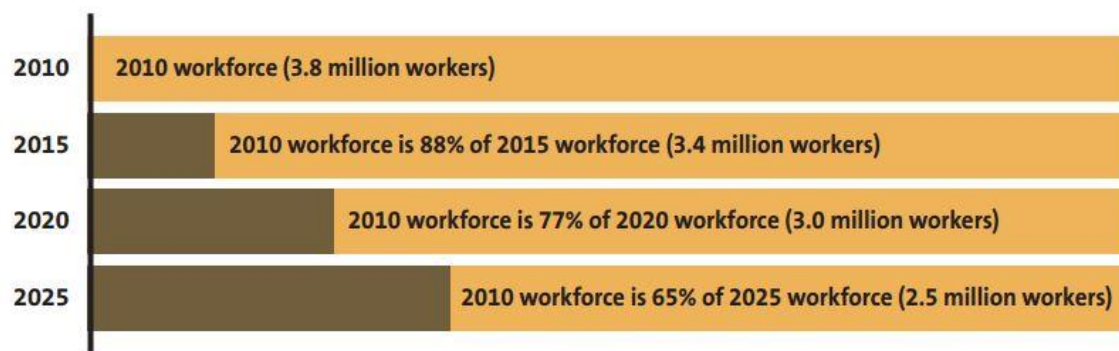
Source: IIFW Calculation of 2012 American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample, U.S. Census Bureau

¹ Source: Indiana Commission for Higher Education Data Submission System

There is plenty of data to confirm that skilling-up the adult sector of Indiana’s workforce is crucial for the state to meet its education and workforce commitments, reduce poverty, and raise household incomes. According to a Working Poor Families Project analysis of 2013 U.S. Census data, 30.1 percent of adults in Indiana ages 25-54 had only a high school diploma or equivalent, a higher percentage than all our neighboring states except Kentucky. In addition, 589,585 or 22.9 percent of all working-age Hoosier adults had some post-secondary education but no degree. Only 36 percent of Indiana’s adults ages 25-54 had an associate degree or higher, the lowest amongst our neighbors, again except for Kentucky. Furthermore, 11 percent of adults ages 25-54 were without a high school diploma or equivalent. However, just 6.8 percent of Indiana adults ages 25-54 were enrolled in post-secondary education in 2013.² The median earnings for adults 25 and over with no post-secondary education is a little over \$24,000.³ However, attaining just a one-year post-secondary certificate can add about 20 percent to median earnings, and can make the holder eligible for some of Indiana’s highest-demand jobs.⁴

Moreover, the Indiana Skills2Compete Coalition’s own research has found that adults who have been in the workforce since 2010 will remain the majority of Indiana’s workforce through 2025, reinforcing the need for bills like SB 509 that create solutions for adults in Indiana’s economy.⁵

Current Working Age Indiana Adults in the Current and Projected Population, 2010-2025



Source: Calculated by National Skills Coalition using population projections from the Indiana Business Research Center.

We strongly support SB 509, and believe it takes a needed step for Indiana’s adult students and for the future of our workforce. Re-shaping the state’s current Part-Time Grant into an Adult Learners Grant that provides incentives for adults to pursue study in priority economic sectors will both help those students complete degrees and credentials leading to high-wage, high-demand jobs and will also help close Indiana’s skills gap. Thank you for your consideration.

² Working Poor Families Project, data generated by Population Reference Bureau, analysis of 2013 American Community Survey goo.gl/hKDBOU

³ U.S. Census American Community Survey, 2013.

⁴ Source: Georgetown Center on Education and the Workforce: Certificates: Gateway to Gainful Employment and College Degrees, June 2012.

⁵ National Skills Coalition and the Indiana Institute for Working Families, ‘Indiana’s Forgotten Middle-Skill Jobs 2013’, September 2013.