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December 18, 2009

The Hon. George Miller, Chairman
House Committee on Education and Labor
2101 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Hon. John Kline, Ranking Member
House Committee on Education and Labor
2181 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Miller and Ranking Member Kline:

On behalf of the Campaign for Youth, an alliance of national youth serving organizations dedicated to addressing the needs of young people (ages 16-24) who are out-of-work, out-of-school and out of the mainstream, we support your efforts to address the rising unemployment crisis facing American communities and families and revive our economy through short and long-term job creation. However, we are quite concerned about the level of funding dedicated to disconnected youth and young adults in the in the “Jobs for Main Street” legislation and the exclusion of out-of-school youth and year-round employment and training activities. While the inclusion youth service corps strategies to spur job development and the \$500 million for youth summer employment and training is encouraging, these investments are not nearly enough to address the dismal employment situation of youth and young adults.

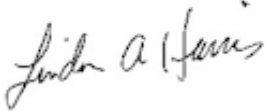
The number of unemployed youth and young adults in the United States is reaching record highs. Nearly four million of the unemployed are under age 25. Youth in high poverty communities, those with disabilities and black teens – whose “official” unemployment rate rose nearly eight points in November to 49.4 percent – have been particularly hard hit. Unless their needs are addressed through recovery or other jobs legislation, youth and young adults – especially those with limited education and job skills – will be left behind when the economy recovers and jobs become available.

As you continue to contemplate passage and enactment of a Jobs Bill, youth and young adults must be a key focus of job creation and retraining strategies. Specifically, the Campaign for Youth recommends an investment of at least \$3 billion to create jobs and paid work experience opportunities for disconnected youth and young adults, and a minimum of 25% of funding investments in infrastructure, green jobs, and public sector employment be directed to train and employ disconnected youth and young adults. With the proper funding and support, existing federal programs and national non-profit networks could quickly ramp up to put at least 1,000,000 youth to work, while providing them with the wrap-around education, work skills, and supports that they need. Enclosed with this cover letter is a jobs strategy that puts young people to work and links them to our economic recovery.

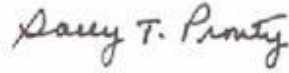
The members of the Campaign for Youth coalition support some 400 programs across the United States that have been successful in assisting disadvantaged and disconnected youth on their path to employment. We stand ready to work with you to advance a jobs agenda that will put young people to work now, allow them to support their families, and invest in their future.

Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions or would like to discuss our recommendations please contact Kisha Bird, Project Director, Campaign for Youth, at (202) 906-8020.

Sincerely,



Linda Harris
Center for Law and Social Policy
Co-chair, Campaign for Youth



Sally Prouty
The Corps Network
Co-chair, Campaign for Youth