

January 27, 2009

The Honorable Louise Slaughter  
Chairwoman  
Committee on Rules  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable David Dreier  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Rules  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

**RE: Support Rep. Grijalva Job Training and Education Amendment (#96) to the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009**

Dear Chairwoman Slaughter and Ranking Member Dreier:

As a coalition of national education, labor, civil rights and business organizations, we are writing to urge adoption of Amendment #96 being introduced by Rep. Raul Grijalva to the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. This amendment addresses the economic and educational needs of English language learners (ELL) and farmworkers. Full economic recovery will only be possible if we target policies to reach those hit hardest by job losses and those facing multiple obstacles to employment in quality jobs. The Grijalva amendment enhances the ability of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act to reach our nation's most vulnerable workers.

Though the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act takes important steps toward placing our economy on a path toward recovery, it may not reach those in need of the most assistance. Despite the vast need, only 4.9% of ELLs are served through the current public workforce system. Likewise, our nation's 1.6 million farmworkers face extremely limited access to education and training opportunities. For the over 5 million ELLs in our nation's schools, the challenges are just as great, as their schools face budget shortfalls and possess limited resources. Given the sobering reality that the economic situation will likely get worse before it gets better, it is critical that ELLs and farmworkers are provided opportunities to develop their skills and compete in our economy.

The Grijalva amendment will substantially improve the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act by addressing the job training and education needs of ELLs and farmworkers. This amendment includes the following:

- \$100 million for the Employment and Training Administration to enable community-based organizations to deliver effective job training services to English language learners and farmworkers;
- \$50 million to the Department of Labor for a national demonstration program to award grants to community-based organizations for integrated job training programs that combine English language acquisition with occupational skills under Sec. 171 of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA);
- \$50 million for existing migrant and seasonal farmworker job training programs under Sec. 167 of WIA;
- \$250 million for adult education with a priority for programs that provide English as a second language under Title II of WIA, and;

- \$500 million for Title III programs under the No Child Left Behind Act, which provides grants for language support for ELLs.

These smart and targeted investments will greatly improve the ability of millions of individuals compete in our economy. While modest in comparison with other provisions in the legislation, these investments possess the potential to reap great rewards for our economy. We strongly urge members of the Rules Committee to support the Grijalva amendment and target resources for the education and training of our nation's English language learners and farmworkers. For more information on the benefits of these investments, please contact Sam Jammal at the Mexican American Legal Defense & Educational Fund (MALDEF) at [sjammal@maldef.org](mailto:sjammal@maldef.org).

Sincerely,

American Library Association  
Asian American Justice Center (AAJC)  
Association of Farmworker Opportunity Programs  
Center for Community Change  
Center for Law and Social Policy  
Coalition on Human Needs  
Cuban American National Council, Inc.  
Labor Council for Latin American Advancement (LCLAA)  
Leadership Conference on Civil Rights (LCCR)  
Mexican American Legal Defense & Educational Fund (MALDEF)  
National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)  
National Center for Family Literacy  
National Coalition for Literacy  
National Council of La Raza (NCLR)  
National Council of State Directors of Adult Education  
Proliteracy  
Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL)  
United States Hispanic Chamber of Commerce

CC: The Honorable Nancy Pelosi, Speaker  
The Honorable John Boehner, House Minority Leader  
The Honorable Steny Hoyer, House Majority Leader  
The Honorable Dave Obey, Chairman, House Committee on Appropriations  
The Honorable Jerry Lewis, Ranking Member, House Committee on Appropriations