



MASS WORKFORCE ASSOCIATION
ONE SYSTEM – ONE VOICE

July 11, 2023

Senator Pat D. Jehlen, Chair
Joint Committee on Labor and Workforce Development
Massachusetts State House, Room 424
Boston, MA, 02133

Representative Josh S. Cutler, Chair
Joint Committee on Labor and Workforce Development
Massachusetts State House, Room 472
Boston, MA, 02133

Dear Chair Jehlen, Chair Cutler and Members of the Committee:

I am writing in support of H.1862, *An Act relative to workforce data accessibility*, filed by Representative Cutler and S.1187, *An Act to make data on workforce development outcomes public and accessible*, filed by Senator Jehlen.

The Massachusetts Workforce Association (MWA) is a statewide membership association that leads, advocates, and convenes on behalf of the state's workforce development system. MWA provides a unified voice for the state's regionally-led workforce development system to ensure it is responsive to the dynamic demands of businesses, job seekers, incumbent workers, and youth throughout the Commonwealth.

In addition to ensuring we have a well-resourced workforce system, MWA believes strongly that Massachusetts' workforce system should be supported by a data system that makes use of the latest and best technology, can match job seekers' interests and skills with available jobs, and enables the workforce system, state partners and stakeholders to effectively track, manage, measure, and evaluate programs, performance, and outcomes.

The first step to creating this type of data system in the Commonwealth is ensuring timely access to relevant data. H.1862 and S.1187 would require timely access to Department of Unemployment Assistance (DUA) wage data to help the workforce system better understand employment outcomes of the individuals served by the publicly funded workforce development system. It would utilize existing data reporting mechanisms between DUA and the Department of Career Services, and importantly, would not place any additional reporting requirements on employers. This type of data sharing would help local workforce development organizations measure the effectiveness of various publicly funded programs by analyzing participant employment outcomes using wage data; outcomes they would be unable to effectively track themselves via surveys or other methods, or that are already gathered by other parts of the

state's workforce/unemployment system; and allow them to understand whether these programs are leading to equitable outcomes for historically underserved populations in their regions. As it is now, data that are reported are limited to only an aggregate of federally funded programs at a state and regional level.

Additionally, these two companion bills would establish a task force to address the state's workforce data infrastructure with the goal of creating data systems that can illustrate how workforce education and training programs are providing opportunities for sustainable employment across the Commonwealth. As such, this legislation would be an important first step to improve our state's workforce data infrastructure. States such as California, Kentucky, New York, and Oregon, among others, have already developed these types of data systems. This is the time for Massachusetts to catch up.

As the Commonwealth invests tens of millions of ARPA and state funds in workforce development programs, it is vital that we improve access to the most current and comprehensive data. This will allow us to not only establish critical baselines but to be better able to evaluate the progress these investments are making in closing equity gaps, and then make the necessary changes to ensure they do so.

We look forward to working with the committee on ways to build a robust workforce development data system that will benefit workers and employers alike. As such, we respectfully request your support of H.1862 and S.1187. Should you need any more information please do not hesitate to reach out to me either by phone: 617-872-4127, or e-mail: rvaisanen@massworkforce.com. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Raija Vaisanen
Executive Director
Massachusetts Workforce Association

Cc: Senate President Karen Spilka
Speaker of the House Ronald Mariano