

BUILDING THE FUTURE WORKFORCE

1. **WHEREAS**, nationally, more than 5.4 million youth, ages 16-24, are disconnected from the labor market - are not in school and do not have a job; and
2. **WHEREAS**, the employment rate for youth in 2004 was 42.3 percent, a record low in the 57 years the statistics have been collected;
3. **WHEREAS**, the largest growing segment of the youth labor force is largely minority and immigrant and mostly concentrated in areas of cities that have the lowest socioeconomic statistics; and
4. **WHEREAS**, cities, especially areas with low socioeconomic statistics, are where more youth are at-risk of dropping out, dropping out of school, and are least prepared to enter the workforce; and
5. **WHEREAS**, according to the Center on Labor Market Studies at Northeastern University, youth participation in the labor force will continue to decline, especially among young males; and
6. **WHEREAS**, the national graduation rate is 68 percent, and nearly one-third of public high school students fail to graduate, and in many of the nation's low-income neighborhoods dropout rates are much higher - 50 percent or higher; and
10. **WHEREAS**, the literacy rate from 2003-2030 is expected to decline by 11 percent, primarily due to the increase of immigrants with less than a high school level of education; and
11. **WHEREAS**, there is growing evidence that successful completion of the 9th grade is a key indicator of whether or not a student will drop out of high school, based on research on Chicago Public Schools' students, indicating that those on track at the end of freshman year were 3 1/2 times more likely to graduate in 4 years. Thus, even students who achieved in middle school, but failed in 9th grade, were unlikely to graduate in 4 years; and

12. **WHEREAS**, those with the skills of typical high school dropouts will qualify for only 10 percent of all new jobs during this decade; and
13. **WHEREAS**, those with more years of schooling have higher earnings than those with less schooling and the size of the earnings advantages grows larger over time. High school dropouts on average earn \$9,200 per year less than high school graduates, and about \$1 million less than college graduates over a lifetime; and
14. **WHEREAS**, early work experience helps improve prospects for employability in the later teens and early 20's, helps develop both soft skills and occupational skills, and, for economically disadvantaged and minority youth, increases their likelihood of graduation from high school relative to those who do not work at all; and
15. **WHEREAS**, youth funding has consistently declined since FY 1994 from \$1.611 billion to \$990.1 million in FY 06; and
16. **WHEREAS**, in the FY 2007 budget the Administration proposes to eliminate youth formula funding in the *Workforce Investment Act* (WIA) in favor of a state block grant, which would result in no more direct services to youth including summer job opportunities; and
17. **WHEREAS**, the Administration is proposing to eliminate two programs within TRIO - Upward Bound and Talent Search - and totally eliminate GEAR UP and Perkins Vocational and Technical Education programs; and
18. **WHEREAS**, the federal TRIO programs are designed to motivate and support students from disadvantaged backgrounds, increase educational opportunity, college readiness and success for low-income, high-risk students; and
19. **WHEREAS**, the GEAR UP program is designed to increase the number of low-income students prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary education. The focus of

the GEAR UP program is to get middle and high school kids ready for college; and

20. **WHEREAS**, the basic intent of Perkins Vocational Education programs is to help local schools implement programs to develop the academic, vocational and technical skills of students in high schools, community colleges, and regional technical centers,
21. **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that in order to ensure the education and skills development of the future workforce, The U.S. Conference of Mayors calls on Congress and the Administration to restore the WIA Youth formula program and authorization funding for the formula program at not less than \$1 billion;
22. **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that The U.S. Conference of Mayors urges Congress to make a major new investment in our nation's youth of at least \$1 billion to address the unmet needs of youth, especially the disconnected population; and
23. **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that The U.S. Conference of Mayors calls for Congress and the Administration to fund TRIO, GEAR UP and Perkins Vocational and Technical Education programs at a minimum of FY 2002 levels; and
24. **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that The U.S. Conference of Mayors recommends that comprehensive strategies for summer learning and training be created to increase educational opportunities and work experiences for at-risk youth, including dropouts, and to prevent the traditional drop off of skills during the summer for at-risk youth. A variety of strategies include summer school, cultural and athletic programs, summer jobs and internships, job shadowing, mentoring, and other experiential learning opportunities; and
25. **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that The U.S. Conference of Mayors calls on Congress and the Administration to provide funding for summer work experience to allow for opportunities for at-risk and disconnected youth which are proven to keep young people connected to school and provide a greater opportunity for making livable wages in the future. This includes summer jobs, internships and job shadowing; and

26. **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that The U.S. Conference of Mayors urges increased funding to allow access to and availability of after-school and out-of-school time (during the school year and breaks) for at-risk and low-income youth that provide academic, athletic, cultural and social activities to further enhance learning and skills - providing exposure to youth to experiences and opportunities which they otherwise would not receive; and
27. **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that The U.S. Conference of Mayors urges Congress and the Administration to establish national policy and programs for opportunities during the school-year for skills development and career exposure for at-risk and disconnected youth through educational work experiences and opportunities in building awareness and relating job skills to classroom learning standards; and
28. **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that The U.S. Conference of Mayors calls for the establishment of alternative schools and learning settings for youth who have not been engaged in traditional education settings, as well as create or enhance magnet, special theme, vocational education schools and experiences, and alternative schools that meet the needs of these at-risk and disconnected youth, which includes in- and out-of-school youth, foster care and juvenile offenders; and
29. **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that The U.S. Conference of Mayors urges Congress and the Administration to build upon best practices and lessons learned from programs such as the Youth Opportunity Grant Program, which has been successful in reaching out to youth who have disappeared from school and the labor market, re-engaged them and provided multiple avenues for re-connecting youth to learning and work; and
30. **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that The U.S. Conference of Mayors calls for the initiation and enhancement of existing opportunities to educate, build awareness, and prepare students and their families for postsecondary education experiences. For the transition to postsecondary education this requires an

active effort to help parents and students understand the value of postsecondary education, the course work necessary to gain access to, and the affordability of the following: vocational-technical schools, 2-year community colleges and 4-year education institutions.

Projected Cost: Unknown