

THE CHAMBER

Charlottesville Regional Chamber of Commerce



A New Century – “dedicated to representing private enterprise, promoting business and enhancing the quality of life in our Greater Charlottesville communities.”

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November 24, 2015

TO : LEGISLATIVE DELEGATION - GREATER CHARLOTTESVILLE (15-2)
SENATE: Creigh Deeds (D-25); Emmett W. Hanger, Jr. (R-24); Bryce E. Reeves (R-17); Frank M. Ruff, Jr. (R-15)
HOUSE: Richard P. Bell (R-20); Rob B. Bell, III (R-58); C. Matthew Fariss (R-59); R. Steven Landes (R-25); Edward T. Scott (R-30); David Toscano (D-57)\

cc: The Board of Directors, Charlottesville Regional Chamber of Commerce
The Honorable Terence R. McAuliffe, Governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia
Honorable Members of the Albemarle County Board of Supervisors
Honorable Members of the Charlottesville City Council

FROM : Timothy Hulbert, IOM, Chamber President

RE : INNOVATIVE WORKFORCE CREDENTIALS INITIATIVE

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Our Charlottesville Regional Chamber of Commerce strongly supports and enthusiastically embraces the innovative “workforce credentials” initiative presented in September by Dr. Glen DuBois, Chancellor of the Virginia Community College System, to the Virginia General Assembly.

Dr. DuBois’ watershed report to the General Assembly – “Workforce Credentials: The Pathway to Virginia’s New Middle Class,” outlines a landmark initiative for your consideration and favorable action.

Dr. DuBois’ telling report has assessed the current and future workforce needs of our Commonwealth of Virginia. It clearly articulates the considerable variance between those needs with the current state of the Commonwealth’s workforce training capacities – a large and increasing disparity between the job-filling needs of enterprise and available training and certification.

Our Chamber strongly urges that the General Assembly address and remedy this current and growing gap within our Commonwealth.

The Workforce Credentials report states that the “misalignment requires an understanding of the staffing ratio consistent throughout today’s workplace. In general, for every one job that requires an advanced degree, there are two jobs that require a bachelor’s degree, and seven jobs that require

postsecondary training that leads to an associate's degree or industry-recognized credential beyond a high school diploma but not a four-year degree."

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An earlier analysis, conducted in conjunction with the Virginia Chamber of Commerce "Blueprint Virginia" undertaking, estimates that by 2022, Virginia's sustained economy and vitality will demand that 1.5 million jobs be filled. Fully one-third of those jobs will require citizens with an Associate's degree and/or industry-recognized certifications.

The proposal – led by Virginia's 23 community colleges – offers an innovative approach, at reasonable levels of new investment, to building Virginia's existing workforce by establishing a determined, effective, performance-based program to train and prepare an adequate, on-going and growing number of our fellow Virginia citizens with industry-recognized workforce credentials.

That currently nineteen (19) other states, including our neighboring states just to the north and south, have some form of this workforce credentialing certifications training, adds further impetus to the urgency for your prompt attention – and action.

Our Chamber joins with other Chambers and business organizations across our Commonwealth in full support for reasonable investment by the Commonwealth of Virginia for enhanced industry-recognized workforce credentialing.

As always, our Chamber thanks you and applauds your responsiveness to important public policy opportunities. We believe this proposed innovative workforce credentialing initiative to be needed, timely and deserving of your support through the legislative process.

We look forward to your support and the enactment in the General Assembly and signature by Governor McAuliffe.

Again, thank you.