



Testimony in Support of Workforce Training Legislation

May 30, 2017
Joint Committee on Labor & Workforce Development
State House, B-2
Boston, MA

Submitted by: Chris Kealey, Deputy Director, Massachusetts Business Roundtable

Good afternoon Chairman Lewis, Chairman Brodeur and members of the Joint Committee on Labor & Workforce Development, my name is Chris Kealey, Deputy Director of the Massachusetts Business Roundtable. I appreciate this opportunity to offer testimony on legislation that will improve and expand workforce training opportunities across Massachusetts. I want to begin by thanking the Chairmen, as well as members of this Committee and your staffs, for participating in two working sessions with a broad array of stakeholders this spring hosted by the Roundtable to advance workforce solutions.

I am pleased to testify this afternoon in support of legislation filed by Chairman Joseph Wagner (HB 3160) and the late Senator Kenneth Donnelly (SB 1006) and respectfully suggest a minor amendment to the language to include performance measures that strengthen the likelihood of success that job seekers will get and maintain employment in diverse industries in every region of the state.

The Roundtable is a non-profit, non-partisan, statewide public policy organization comprised of CEOs and senior business leaders working together to make the Commonwealth a better, more competitive place to do business within the global economy. Business leaders continually cite the state's highly skilled and highly educated workforce as our top competitive advantage. Access to talent is a key determinant of location and expansion decisions made by companies, which directly impacts regional economies throughout the state.

Earlier this year, the Roundtable Board of Directors unanimously adopted a series of principles and policy priorities to strengthen the education and workforce development systems to ensure that employers continue to have access to the pipeline of talented workers they need to compete. The Roundtable supports a workforce system that aligns closely with employer needs, sets measurable goals and meets evolving talent demands across industry sectors. Among the Roundtable's policy priorities for the 2017-18 legislative session is support for the Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund managed by Commonwealth Corporation.

The Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund provides competitive, statewide job training funding that engages local employers, educators and workforce professionals through regional partnerships that lead to jobs. It has a proven track record of success helping job seekers develop the skills and access the jobs that are in high demand. As a member the Workforce Solutions Group, a statewide advocacy coalition working to build an effective training and education system that increases workers' skills, the Roundtable has long supported the Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund.

SB 1006 and HB 3160 would diversify the state's Workforce Training Fund to support job pipeline training through the Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund. The legislation would allow up to 5% of the

Workforce Training Fund, approximately \$1.1 million, to be used for sector based job training for non-incumbent workers. With the addition of some common sense performance language and the possibility of state matching funds, we believe this legislation will help job seekers develop new skills and enable employers to find the right talent to fuel economic growth in Massachusetts.

Sadly, the Commonwealth lost a dedicated public servant and champion for workforce development this year with the passing of Senator Ken Donnelly. His steadfast support for the Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund helped thousands of job seekers find good jobs and develop new career pathways.

On behalf of the Massachusetts Business Roundtable, I want to thank you for this opportunity to support workforce training opportunities that will strengthen our regional economies and help job seekers develop the skills needed to succeed in the 21st century global economy.

The Massachusetts Business Roundtable is a non-profit, non-partisan, statewide public policy organization comprised of chief executive officers and senior executives from some of the state's largest employers with more than 250,000 employees across the Commonwealth. The Roundtable's mission is to strengthen the state's long-term economic vitality with the goal to make Massachusetts a highly-desirable place to do business. The Roundtable engages with leaders from industry, government and higher education to develop public policy solutions that improve the long-term health of the Massachusetts economy.