



INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF PROFESSIONAL & TECHNICAL ENGINEERS AFL-CIO & CLC

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Richard Trumka, President
American Federation of Labor
and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO)
815 16th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20006

Dear President Trumka,

As President of the International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers (IFPTE), AFL-CIO, I am writing to lend my union's full support of Chelsea Orvella to fill the labor seat on the newly created Workforce Information Advisory Council (WIAC). As you may know, the creation of this council was called for in Section 308 of HR 803 (PL 113-128), the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), which was signed into law by President Obama on July 22nd.

It is IFPTE's understanding that the Council will be determined by the Department of Labor (DOL), with input from key members of Congress and other stakeholder groups, including the AFL-CIO. With respect to labor representation on the council, the law stipulates that, "1 member who is a representative of labor organizations, who has been nominated by a national labor federation". IFPTE believes that Chelsea Orvella is the perfect person to fill labor's designated seat and enlists the support of the AFL-CIO to support her as well.

Ms. Orvella is the legislative director for the Society of Professional Engineering Employees in Aerospace (SPEEA), IFPTE Local 2001, representing 25,000 high-tech workers in Washington, Kansas, Oregon, California, Utah and Florida, most employed by The Boeing Company. As engineers, scientists, technicians and other technical workers, one of the primary issues concerning SPEEA members is the expansion of the H-1B STEM visa program. Ms. Orvella has considerable first-hand experience working with laid-off workers in Washington State. She has also worked on immigration policy around high-tech temporary worker on H-1B visas. She has been an advocate for reforms that protect both American and foreign workers; policies that would tie future flow to independent market analysis; and better labor market data to track career trajectories for graduates of science, technology engineering and math (STEM) programs. Another strong area of interest is the high student debt many graduates bear, which limits career options and discourages students from pursuing studies in STEM fields.

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We view the new WIAC as a potentially important tool in attaining better data collection to help in determining actual labor shortages, if any, in the STEM fields. Where there are jobs to be filled, the WIAC will also be valuable in helping students, education systems, and workforce development organizations more precisely invest in the skill development needed by workers and industry.

Led by Ms. Orvella's stewardship, IFPTE and SPEEA have worked extensively these last couple of years asking that an occupation field be added to Unemployment Insurance (UI) wage records. We originally worked with Senator Ron Wyden to have language included in the Senate passed CIR bill, followed by efforts to get language into a House bill. Despite interest from lawmakers, neither of those efforts has so far been successful. In the ongoing initiative, Ms. Orvella continues talking with Labor Market Information (LMI) Directors across the country, the DOL's Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), the National Skills Coalition, the Workforce Data Quality Campaign, the Census Bureau, the Department of Education and others about the many nuances of education-to-workforce tracking. She has covered all bases when it comes to this issue.

Ms. Orvella is also currently a board member for the Washington State Aerospace and Advanced Manufacturing Center of Excellence and Aerospace and Advanced Manufacturing Pipeline Advisory Committee. Both committees focus on aligning training programs with workforce demands in aerospace. Prior to joining SPEEA, Ms. Orvella served as a Workforce Investment Act Liaison Program Co-Director at the Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO (WSLC). In that role she successfully applied for a Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) ARRA grant and co-administered the WSLC's efforts, in strong partnership with the one-stop system, to connect more workers with TAA services. She also worked for Congressman Adam Smith for several years in both Washington D.C. and Washington State.

Given her extensive work and background on this issue it is our belief that Ms. Orvella is uniquely qualified to present labor's perspective on the new Workforce Information Advisory Council. IFPTE fully recommends her to fill labor's seat on the WIAC, and urges the AFL-CIO to support her for this position.

Sincerely,



Gregory J. Junemann
President