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For More Information:
Justin Caporusso
(916) 447-4806

JCaporusso@rcrcnet.org

RCRC Applauds Reauthorization of Workforce Investment Act

Job Training and Business Services Especially Important for Rural Communities

SACRAMENTO, CA – July 22, 2014 – Earlier today, President Obama signed the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), H.R. 803, to reauthorize and modernize the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998. The WIA was enacted to serve as the nation’s employment and job training program by providing federal funding to states for job training, education, and employment services for unemployed and underemployed workers and youth. In California, WIA helps provide businesses with the skilled workforce they need to compete in the 21st Century global economy. WIA has been up for reauthorization for more than decade.

“We extend our sincere thanks to House and Senate leadership for passing the WIOA, and President Obama for signing this legislation into law,” said Lee Adams, RCRC Vice Chair and Sierra County Supervisor. “The WIA and our local WIBs provide much needed programs and services which improve our local economies, our main streets, and in the end, our families.”

The principle vehicle for the WIA are Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs), made up of local elected officials, business, labor, education, and community based organizations from each local community. The WIBs’ main role is to direct federal, state, and local funding to a variety of workforce development programs and services. WIBs also manage California’s local American Job Centers, where job seekers can get employment information, discover career development training opportunities, and connect to various programs within their local areas.

Not only has the WIA been critical to strengthening our local, regional, and state economies, but WIA investments in employment training programs and services, particularly in rural counties, are vital to developing the highly-skilled and technical workforce our businesses need to sustain, maintain, and grow our competitive edge during these challenging economic times.

The passage of WIOA means that local elected officials, in partnership with business-led WIBs, can continue to provide the guidance, support, and coordination to California's businesses and workforce, leading to job creation, and helping businesses remain competitive in the marketplace.

RCRC has long advocated for the reauthorization of the WIA, and has been active in each step of the current bill as it made its way through the legislative process. Given the mission of the WIA, and the directive placed upon WIBs, passage of WIOA will serve as a catalyst for economic development in our rural areas, where we often see high levels of unemployment, and a lack of access to goods and services.

ABOUT RURAL COUNTY REPRESENTATIVES OF CALIFORNIA (RCRC)

The Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC) is a thirty-four member county strong service organization that champions policies on behalf of California's rural counties. RCRC is dedicated to representing the collective unique interests of its membership, providing legislative and regulatory representation at the State and Federal levels, and providing responsible services for its members to enhance and protect the quality of life in rural California counties. To learn more about RCRC, visit rcrcnet.org and follow @RuralCounties on Twitter.

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