



January 25, 2016

Senator Kate Sullivan, Chairwoman
Education Committee
Room 1525, State Capitol
Lincoln NE 68509

Chairwoman Sullivan and Members of the Education Committee:

My name is Katie Pitts and I am the Policy Director at Nebraska Appleseed. Nebraska Appleseed is a nonprofit, legal advocacy organization that works for justice and opportunity for all Nebraskans. I am here today to testify in support of LB 752.

The jobs of the future will require Nebraska's workforce to have training and education beyond the high school level. By 2018, 64% of the available jobs in Nebraska will require a post-secondary education.ⁱ Yet, nearly 10% of all Nebraskans ages 18 to 64 lack a high school degree or an equivalent. Moreover, 36% of adults in Nebraska are at or below basic literacy levels.ⁱⁱ With skill deficiencies such as these, many individuals are unable to access quality jobs and fully participate in our communities and economy. We must address this issue to ensure families have the skills they need to move ahead and to ensure our employers have the skilled employees they require.

We can begin to address this skills gap by determining what measures would help more adults complete basic education and continue on to postsecondary education, and ultimately to an in-demand job. This is what LB 752 aims to do, through the creation of the Adult Career Pathways Task Force. This Task Force would formally bring together a broad group of policymakers, educators, businesses, state departments and other stakeholders to study the continuity between adult education, GED and postsecondary education, and to formulate recommendations to ensure more students gain skills and move into high-demand employment.

The formalization of this assessment in the legislative branch will ensure continuity in this process, that all stakeholders are convened and heard, and that forward momentum continues. This will be critical to ensure Nebraska has the employees we need for the jobs of the future. For these reasons, we urge this committee to advance LB 752.

Sincerely,

Katie Pitts, J.D.
Policy Director

ⁱ Georgetown University Center for Education, “Help Wanted: Projections of Jobs and Education Requirements through 2018 – State Level Analysis,” available at <https://georgetown.app.box.com/s/9pvw2eqcu0x8jz665nxg>

ⁱⁱ Working Poor Families Project, generated by the Population Reference Bureau, American Community Survey (or US Census depending on indicator), 2013.