

September 13, 2012

The Honorable Edmund G. Brown
Governor of California
State Capitol Building
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Senate Bill 1070 (Steinberg) – REQUEST FOR SIGNATURE

Dear Governor Brown:

On behalf of AMERICA'S EDGE, a national business leaders organization including more than 70 California business leaders committed to strengthening American businesses and our state's economy through proven investments in children and youth, we respectfully request your signature on **Senate Bill 1070**. This bill would reauthorize and improve the Career Technical Education Pathways Initiative (Education Code section 885323, SB 70 of 2005), a program that has invested in successful education, training and workforce development pathways in regions across California.

Since its inception in 2005, the Pathways Initiative has served nearly 750,000 California middle and high school pupils and college students through a variety of investments designed to increase their success in college and career. The statutory sunset of the initiative at the end of this calendar year provides an opportunity to not just extend, but to tighten the focus of the program on preparing students to succeed in high priority sectors of the state's economy.

Through this bill, state-funded California Partnership Academies (one model of Linked Learning), will be eligible for continued funding on a competitive basis.

As you know, Linked Learning is the multi-year education approach that integrates rigorous academics, relevant career-technical education, support services for students and real-world, work-based learning experiences supported by local employers. Linked Learning students opt-in to industry themed pathways in a wide range of fields, and these pathways prepare students for future careers as well as a full range of postsecondary options, including two- and four-year college, apprenticeships, the military or formal employment training.

Career-themed education is critical to our economy because California businesses are not getting workers with the right skills. According to the AMERICA'S EDGE report "Can California Compete? Reducing the Skills Gap and Building a Skilled Workforce through Linked Learning," nearly half (47 percent) of California jobs are in "middle skills" careers – requiring education beyond a high school diploma but less than a 4-year college degree. However, only 38 percent of California workers have the skills to fill these positions, creating a nearly 10-percentage-point skills gap. California's economic health looks even more dire when this middle-skill "gap" is coupled with the shortage of workers expected for careers requiring science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) skills.

The Linked Learning approach has been identified as one of the most promising strategies for high school transformation. National studies on Career Academies, upon which Linked Learning is based, indicate that students who participate in such programs go on to work 12 percent more hours per week and earn 11 percent more money than non-participating students.

Not only is Linked Learning good for students, it is good for California businesses. Increased productivity for businesses and higher incomes for employees leads to greater spending power for individuals and more revenue for California. Fewer dropouts also means less of a financial burden to the state and taxpayers. More importantly, such programs provide students with critical work-readiness skills they will need to succeed in an increasingly competitive job market.

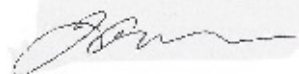
For these reasons, we respectfully request your signature on Senate Bill 1070. Thank you for your thoughtful consideration.

Sincerely,



Thomas Atwood
Owner
Vallejo Insurance
/s

Wesley Coleman
Executive Vice President & Chief Human
Resources Officer (Retired)
The Walt Disney Company



Teresa Goodwin
President
PeopleSpaces Design Group



Darrin Gross
Sr. Director, Corporate Partnerships
Oakland Athletics



John Orr
President & CEO
North State Building Industry Association



Stephen Cercone
President
Police Chief Consultants, LLC



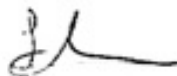
Brian Dowd
Business Development Manager
Granite Construction Co.



Amy Grat
CEO
International Trade Education Programs



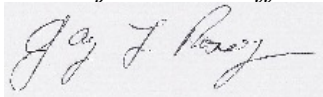
Rick Larkey
Director, Workforce Development
North State Building Industry Association



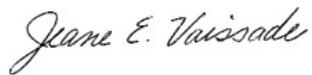
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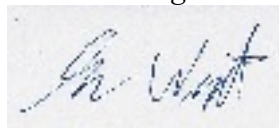


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