



April 18, 2024

From: Roxanne Vought, Executive Director, Vermont Businesses for Social Responsibility (VBSR)

Re: H.707, An act relating to revising the delivery and governance of the Vermont workforce system

Chair Ram-Hinsdale and esteemed members of the Committee:

I'm writing on behalf of Vermont Businesses for Social Responsibility (VBSR) and our 700 member businesses across Vermont in support of H.707, a bill that addresses long-standing challenges in the governance and structure of Vermont's workforce system.

H. 707 streamlines the State Workforce Development Board and creates the Office of Workforce Expansion & Development, which will provide the opportunity to focus the role of the Department of Labor and bring much-needed capacity and coordination to the important work of Workforce Development, which spans state government.

The many stakeholders in Vermont's workforce system will benefit from this bill, including Vermont businesses. The strength of Vermont's economy is dependent on the strength of Vermont's workforce, and a strategic, dedicated office to support this work is essential to creating a prosperous Vermont, for businesses, educators, and workers alike. Reducing the size of the State Workforce Development Board will allow for more meaningful and in-depth collaboration as we build a new workforce strategy.

We have been monitoring the good work of the SOCWED for the past two years since the passage of Act 183 in 2022. We are pleased to see the changes proposed in H.707, which are a result of the Committee's deliberations and the recommendations made by the consultants hired to assist them. We would be supportive of any effort to accelerate the final determination of roles and responsibilities within state government and any statute changes that would need to be made, so as not to wait 2 more years for such decisions to be made, as currently outlined in Section 4 of H.707. If a way can be found to have this work be completed by the end of 2024 in time for the next Legislative session, we would be very much in favor of that.

VBSR members across industries, geographies, and sizes regularly cite workforce development as an essential area for improvement. We are encouraged by H.707 and its vision and ask that you join us in supporting this legislation.

Thank you for your time and dedicated work on behalf of Vermonters.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Roxanne Vought", written in a cursive style.

Roxanne Vought
Executive Director

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