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EMERGING THREATS AND CAPABILITIES

March 15, 2013

Governor Nathan Deal
Office of the Governor
203 State Capitol
Atlanta, GA 30334

Dear Governor Deal:

I received your letter of March 8, 2013, encouraging my support for H.R. 803 – Supporting Knowledge and Investing in Lifelong Skills (SKILLS) Act – a proposal that attempts to update the Workforce Investment Act (WIA).

Unfortunately, I cannot support H.R. 803 because it does not adequately address the specialized employment and training needs of those at-risk in our community, including young people, veterans, older workers, the disabled and other special-needs groups. As structured, it appears the bill will pit special-needs groups against those facing far less barriers to employment. It would also gut a 40-year bipartisan effort to target services in a nuanced and sophisticated way. Groups with special needs deserve more targeted services.

As a former DeKalb County Commissioner and board member of the DeKalb Community Service Board (CSB) and four-term Congressman who has visited with board, staff and participants at targeted employment programs such as the Bobby Dodd Center and Goodwill Industries, I can personally attest that WIA funds are essential to special-needs Georgians. By lumping them in with all other job seekers, we will diminish their opportunities.

I appreciate you sharing your perspective on H.R. 803, but must respectfully disagree. I do want to continue to dialogue with you. Only by sharing our opinions and perspectives will we be able to reach common ground for the good of all Georgians.

With best personal regards, I remain

Very truly yours,



Henry C. "Hank" Johnson

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