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December 5, 2017

Mr. David Rattray
President, UNITE-LA
Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce
350 S. Bixel Street
Los Angeles, CA 90017

Dear Mr. Rattray:

We are writing to express our support for the work of the Los Angeles Compact (L.A. Compact) in its efforts to prepare disconnected students for college and the workforce.

An educated and prepared workforce is critical to the economic viability and future of Los Angeles County. Statewide projections suggest that 83 percent of jobs between 2024-2030 will require some level of post-secondary education.

According to the Public Policy Institute of California, an estimated 38 percent of jobs in California will require at least a bachelor's degree in 2030, but population and education trends suggest that only 33 percent of working-age adults will possess a bachelor's degree -- a shortfall of 1.1 million college graduates. Middle skill jobs, positions which require some education beyond high school, are expected to account for 50 percent of California's labor market in 2024, but only 39 percent of individuals are projected to meet the demand.

While these numbers provide a statewide perspective, it is probable, given the population size and labor market in Los Angeles County, that with current trends, this County would be impacted significantly. If current trends persist, there may be a shortage in the number of individuals eligible to fulfill our employment needs. Beyond the economic and workforce needs, these unmet demands have other implications, including increased reliance on public assistance and safety net programs, if this potential gap is not addressed.

Furthermore, recent studies have found that thousands of families lack access to high-quality early childhood education programs, and only 41 percent of students are reading at grade level by the third grade. Moreover, youth from the child welfare and juvenile justice systems need even more support to receive the education necessary to obtain sustainable careers. A report by Ed Trust West found that the graduation rates for students in foster care were the lowest (58 percent) among at-risk student groups compared to the general state graduation rate (84 percent). The report did not specifically identify graduation rates for "crossover" youth or those with juvenile justice involvement, but their outcomes are similar to those in foster care.

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Given the complexity of the need, we share the L.A. Compact's belief that no single institution or agency, acting in isolation, can solve multifaceted education and workforce readiness challenges. We fully support the collaborative work of the L.A. Compact in meeting its three primary goals for disconnected youth throughout the County:

1. All students graduate from high school;
2. All students have access to and are prepared for success in college; and
3. All students have access to pathways to sustainable jobs and careers.


By providing this letter, we fully commit to supporting the work of the L.A. Compact to expand the capacity to improve education and workforce development outcomes throughout Los Angeles County, particularly for youth involved with the County's child welfare and juvenile justice systems.

Finally, we support its collaborative efforts in bringing together a myriad of County leaders from multiple sectors to transform the educational outcomes for our youth. We look forward to hearing about the progress and successes of the L.A. Compact.

Sincerely,



MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS
Chairman of the Board
Supervisor, Second District



HILDA L. SOLIS
Supervisor, First District



SHEILA KUEHL
Supervisor, Third District



JANICE HAHN
Supervisor, Fourth District



KATHRYN BARGER
Supervisor, Fifth District