MEMORANDUM

To: Single Point of Contact

From: Patricia Bennett, Art Ellison, Co-Chairs
Policy Committee, National Council of
State Directors of Adult Education

Date: February 8, 2005

Re: Nationwide Campaign on Adult Education Appropriation

The National Council of State Directors of Adult Education (NCSDAE), along with its Single Point of Contact (SPOC) network, is initiating a nationwide campaign to fight the budget cut to adult education funding contained in President Bush's Fiscal Year 2006 Budget Proposal.

The information in this memo, along with the attached documents, is intended to assist you as the Single Point of Contact to set in motion the campaign at the state level which will connect thousands of citizens with their Representatives and Senators in Washington.

**Numbers**
We have set a goal of 750 letters from each Congressional district and 750 x the number of Congressional districts in each state for the number of letters to each US Senator. This would mean that Montana would have a goal of 750 letters to their one member of the US House of Representatives and 750 to each of the two US Senators. California would have the same goal of 750 letters per Congressional district and with 53 Congressional districts; the goal for each US Senator from that state would be 39,750 letters.

It is also important that state and local program directors write letters to all members of the House and Senate from their state. Sometimes a local director is the only person who can summarize data about a program's impact in the local area.

Based upon the numbers above we are asking each person to write three letters, one to their Congressperson and one to each of their two US Senators. The letters can be identical in content, with only a change in the address.

Further guidelines on letter writing can be found in one of the attachments to this message.

**Timeframes and Networks**
Some states already have networks in place that can be used to generate letters of support; other states will have to create a network. Local program directors and local teaching staff will be of critical importance to our efforts. Without their active participation it will be impossible to generate the number of letters needed to convince members of Congress that adult education programs need their support.
Congressional Districts
The attachment on Population Centers in Congressional Districts will be helpful in identifying the areas within a district that may have larger adult education programs. Printable maps of each Congressional District can be found at http://nationalatlas.gov/ by clicking on Printable Maps, then Congressional Districts for the 108th Congress. Texas is the only state where substantial changes in the Congressional districts have been made for the 109th Congress.

Feedback
It is extremely important that you be able to track the number of letters sent from programs and individuals in each Congressional district and for the entire state. We have found in the past that this feedback portion of our work often is lacking, however it is the only way that we can determine whether or not our efforts are working. Please include a feedback mechanism in all of the communications that you send to local or regional coordinators of this effort. The number of letters sent by Congressional district and commitments should be recorded online at NCSDAE’s website at www.ncsdae.org or you may go directly to the URL at http://www.AdvancedSurvey.com/default.asp?SurveyID=21891. For commitments you may go to http://www.AdvancedSurvey.com/default.asp?SurveyID=21894.

Information for Local Programs
The proposed 66% cut in federal funding for adult education would have the effect of shutting down adult education programs throughout the states or cutting all existing programs by that percentage. In addition to the cut to adult education funding the President has once again recommended no funding for Even Start programs.

Assistance for Single Points of Contact
There will be many questions at both the state and local level as we move through the next eight months to the end of the appropriations process, hopefully by Sept. 30, 2005. It will be helpful if you could share some of the written communications that you develop for your state. For instance your memo that goes to local networks asking for letters might be useful as a sample to people in other states. Please feel to send copies of that document and any others of interest to aellison@ed.state.nh. We will continue to send materials through the Single Point of Contact Network that will help you in this campaign.

As the questions arise throughout the process feel free to contact Art Ellison the email address above or by calling 603-271-6698.
Possible Strategies for Providing Impact Information Regarding the President’s 2006 Budget

1. Timeframe: need for immediate action and sustained effort, probably through April
   • **Right now.** There is need for immediate action because the President’s budget also severely cuts other services and programs and there will be a huge outcry from those advocates. The goal would be to act immediately and in great numbers so that our voice is not lost. The proposed cuts will shut down literacy, English language and GED preparation programs for our students. Our goal is to generate 750 telephone calls, letters, or faxes to each of our Congressional representatives in the House, and 7,500 telephone calls, letters or faxes to each of our two U.S. Senators.
     • Similar to the reauthorization advocacy last year, an effective strategy is to package student letters with a program letter visibly showing the effects to students and programs. The program letter can be more sophisticated in discussing problems and solutions, including preferred wording.
   • **Extended effort will likely be needed.** We are only at the beginning of the appropriations cycle. Cuts in program funds will be handled by the appropriations or budget committees of the House and Senate. Decision on the WIA Plus Grant Consolidation program would likely require concurrence by appropriation/budget committees and the program committees.

2. What can be done now?
   • Fax or email circumvents anthrax screening that is now in place for letters and packages.

3. What can be done during the home office district breaks?
   • There are two breaks scheduled in which representatives are supposed to be in their home offices. These are excellent times to try to meet or visit at least with top staff.
   • The two breaks are: President’s Day District Work (February 21-25) and Spring District Work (March 25-April 1). It is not too early to schedule appointments.

4. Telephone call script:
   • When you call, you will likely talk to either an aide or someone answering the telephone who is keeping a tally of the calls they receive on the issue. You may only have time to identify yourself and state your position against the cuts and the proposed WIA Plus consolidation grant so be sure to do that first.
     • Give your name and address
     • Say you are a constituent and a registered voter. (Elected officials pay more attention to the opinion of registered voters.)
     • Say you are calling because you are against the President’s proposed cuts in adult education, and the proposed block granting of adult education with job training in the 2006 budget. It will not help if the funding is restored but the program focus is completely abolished.
     • If you have time, say why adult education is important to you.
   • Student stories are very persuasive. This includes stories from students who are program alumni and now meeting adult responsibilities. They can talk about how adult education has made a difference in their lives, e.g., helped them get and keep a job or better job, become a taxpayer, become a citizen, obtain a high school credential, obtain health insurance for
themselves and their family, help their children succeed in school. They can talk about how long they had to wait for services because of the long waiting lists.

- Teachers can talk about individual student success stories or their own commitment and passion for adult education and why it’s important to the community, the state and the country.
- Administrators can talk about how many individuals are served annually by the program, the goals that students achieve, how the federal funds leverage state and local funds, and the importance of adult education.
- Volunteers can talk about why adult education is important to them, and why they donate their valuable time to teach someone else in their community.
- Business leaders can talk about their literacy and English language proficiency needs and the impact of adult education on business success. This includes those running workplace literacy programs. They can talk about the escalating skill needs of their jobs.
- Health care partners involved in health literacy programs can talk about the medical savings and the direct impact on keeping families healthy.

5. Letter writing suggestions:

- Follow the suggested telephone script outline above.
- Whenever possible, mail your letter but also fax your letter. The fax will get their immediately, and mailing your letter will increase the volume of letters that your Representative receives.
- Write “Increase funding for adult education and oppose the block grant” in the subject line of your letter. In the body of the letter, be sure to state first that you are against the proposed cut and want the adult education funding restored to the current level. State that you are against the WIA Plus block grant proposal and want to keep literacy funds for adult literacy.
- Keep the letter to one page. Be clear and avoid jargon.
- Remember to sign it and provide your address.

If you do not know who your representative is or how to contact him/her, go to www.house.gov
This is an excellent, comprehensive site. Simply plug in your zip code and you will get all of the necessary information.

Other federal developments.

- WIA Reauthorization: is still moving forward. The House has submitted a bill that will be marked up next week (H.R. 27) and the Senate has only begun its deliberations with a bill S9.
- Welfare reauthorization is also beginning. The House bill includes a superwaiver in which the Governor could consolidate welfare reform and adult education funds into a demonstration program for public assistance recipients. This is still in the early stages. We are waiting for the Senate to submit a bill.
TALKING POINTS
2006 Budget for Adult Education

We hope that you find these “Talking Points” helpful as you make the case for continued strong support for the education of under-educated and limited English proficient adults. Don’t feel like you need to cover every one of them in your calls and letters and please, DO add your personal experiences and stories—they are very powerful.

• The Administration’s 2006 Budget cuts Adult Education by $369 million, a 66% reduction. The proposal endorses the concept of leaving no child behind at the same time it leaves millions of adults behind, including parents. No American should be left behind when it comes to access to education.

• At the Budget briefing it was stated that adult education may not be the best way to meet the needs of program participants. The budget document itself states there is little or no evidence of effectiveness’. Yet adult education programs have documented strong performance, have met their performance standards and there is NO evidence the new high school initiative proposal will work. Why abandon a program which has successfully met the needs of participants for one with no track record.

• A statement was made at the budget brief that we need to assess what, if any, is the federal role in providing adult education. The federal program was originally created because states were not meeting the needs of high school dropouts, welfare participants, immigrants and other individuals with low levels of literacy without a high school diploma or its equivalent.

• The statement regarding the federal role does not address the fact that many participants are immigrants in need of English language skills. Meeting the needs of our nation’s immigrants is a federal responsibility.

• There is no other system built to meet the many varying needs of adult education students and the public policy priorities that are served when their needs are met, for example; a more highly trained and competitive workforce; intergenerational literacy and increased success of education reform efforts; increased voting and other forms of civic participation, decreased recidivism and more successful preventive health.

• During the budget briefing officials justified reducing federal funds for adult education services because “education is a state issue” not a federal issue. A significant number of adult education students served in these programs are limited English proficient. Immigration is a federal, not a state issue. While states contribute a significant amount to these programs the combination of state and federal funds provides a high quality model of federal/state cooperation.
Reach the White House
The Honorable George W. Bush
President of the United States
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1600 Pennsylvania Ave.
Washington, DC 20500
Phone: 1-202-456-1414
Fax: 1-202-456-2461
Website: www.whitehouse.gov
Email: president@whitehouse.gov  (President George W. Bush)

Send a Letter to a USA Senator
The Honorable
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510
Phone: 1-202-224-3121
Website: www.senate.gov

Write your Congressperson
The Honorable
USA House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515
Phone: 1-202-224-3121
Website: www.house.gov

Senior Senator--Wayne Allard

Washington DC Web Address:
http://allard.senate.gov/

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