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We at Literacy Pittsburgh, an adult education program operating in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, would like to commend your decision to seek feedback from programs operating in the field. As a frontline education program, we believe that improvements can be made to benefit adult learners throughout the United States.

We support many of the changes proposed in the Adult Education Works Act by Senator Jack Reed and Senator Todd Young, which seeks to expand the definition of adult education and reevaluate accountability measures to better match the needs of current learners. We believe that encouraging simpler intake procedures and reporting standards for students are essential to allocate the limited resources adult education programs have to meet student needs.

From our perspective, the current intake procedures can alienate potential participants most in need of education services, and the compliance required to capture data fields can tax staff time and concentration away from participant service. Utilizing consultants specializing in human-centered program participation entry could ultimately pay benefits for both program participants and staff working in the field.

Expanding the definition of adult education to include digital and information literacy skills would match participants' incoming expectations towards program participation and evaluation. A narrow focus on only standardized academic skills often misses the real-world mark of student program participation.

Expanding career and college navigators is essential to assist our students' transition into either of these domains for the first time in a generational lifetime. We also encourage the increase of partnership with career counseling.

The timing of these proposed changes is essential to ensure the long-term relevance, competitiveness, and adaptability of the field of adult education. With post-pandemic competition for employment talent at a premium, our agency often loses qualified and talented staff who become alienated learning, adapting, and complying with complicated industry jargon, confusing metrics, and misaligned metrics.

Thank you for seeking feedback from programs operating in the field, and we hope that you will consider our suggestions.

Sincerely,

Lori como