

July 20, 2020

Re: Comment Letter on the Future of Work Commission's Progress

Dear Future of Work Commissioners:

The [CA EDGE Coalition](#) is a statewide advocacy organization that unites business, labor, social justice, education, and workforce organizations with a mission to build a broadly shared prosperity by advancing state workforce policies and investments to create economic mobility for all Californians. On behalf of the Coalition, this letter serves as initial comments to the Commission's progress report. First and foremost, EDGE acknowledges all of the great work the Commission has done given the circumstances under COVID-19, in addition to elevating the importance of racial justice and equity within California's workforce. With your expertise on these issues, we believe the Commission has the opportunity to develop effective regulatory and policy recommendations that will serve all communities across the State, particularly disadvantaged populations.

As mentioned, we appreciate your acknowledgment of the importance of racial equity in workforce development. Specifically, the progress report emphasizes the challenges of inequity, economic mobility, and low-quality work. We support your goals on ensuring more workers have quality jobs that provide a living wage, stability, access to benefits and have opportunities for training and career advancement. As you move forward with developing your final recommendations, we respectfully ask that you continue to support and expand the following issue items as referenced in your report.

EDGE supports the Commission's intent to develop recommendations to improve employment, wages, and economic mobility through an economic and racial equity lens. As the progress report mentions, people of color, women, older workers, justice-involved individuals, and undocumented immigrants face significant barriers to employment as well as access to education. As supporters of ACA 5 (Weber), a measure that placed a proposition on the November 2020 ballot to reinstate affirmative action, we strongly believe the final recommendations should be drafted through a racial equity lens in order to ensure employment and education opportunities are accessible to underserved communities.

EDGE supports the Commission's intent to develop recommendations to elevate job growth and access to quality jobs. We wholeheartedly agree that regions across the state should bring together community organizations, labor unions, and business leaders to develop local investment strategies to create new quality jobs and improve existing jobs.

EDGE supports the Commission's intent to develop recommendations to improve access to new career pathways and to create industry-wide collaboration. We believe strengthening collaborations between higher education institutions, employers, worker organizations, labor unions, and other community organizations will lead to providing innovative strategies on career pathways for students and dislocated workers. With Governor Newsom's commitment to growing the number of apprenticeships across the State, we recognize that pre-apprenticeships, apprenticeships, and other types of on the job training programs play a significant role in California's economy.

EDGE also supports the latest efforts of the Cradle to Career Workgroup, which is currently considering adding a toolset for adult learners, apprenticeships, and career pathways into the statewide data system. By securely linking data across early childhood education, K-12, postsecondary, and the workforce system, California can empower parents, students, policymakers, workers, and employers with the information they need to support and improve education and employment outcomes. We know this data system will be of great value in identifying gaps and disparities within our education and workforce systems.

Thank you for taking the time to review our input. We hope you find our feedback helpful as you move forward in finalizing recommendations, which will assist California to achieve economic mobility in today's labor market.

For any questions, please contact Anna Alvarado, Policy Director, at aalvarado@caedge.org.

Sincerely,



Zima Creason
Executive Director

Cc: Julie Su, Secretary, California Labor and Workforce Development Agency
Lande Ajose, Senior Policy Advisor for Higher Education, Office of Governor Newsom
Joey Freeman, Chief Deputy Legislative Secretary, Office of Governor Newsom
Members of the California Legislature