

House Concurrent Resolution No. 5037

By Representatives Rehorn and Patterson, Ballard, Barbieri-Lightner, Bethell, Boyer, Burroughs, Campbell, Cox, Crow, Davis, DeCastro, Gilbert, Gordon, Hayzlett, Horst, Huff, Hutchins, Kirk, Loganbill, Merrick, Jim Morrison, Judy Morrison, Neighbor, Ostmeyer, S. Sharp, Showalter, Sloan, Toelkes, Yonally

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13 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION supporting the inclusion of older
14 job seekers as a hard-to-serve population under the Workforce In-
15 vestment Act, the funding of statewide worker training and employ-
16 ment services from the 15% state-level set-aside reserve under that
17 act and increased support for and expansion of existing work training
18 and retraining services for older Kansans, including the Older Kansans
19 Employment Program (OKEP), and urges evaluation of certain exist-
20 ing workforce training and retraining programs administered by the
21 Department of Commerce to ensure that such programs meet the
22 needs of older Kansas workers.
23

24 WHEREAS, An increasing number of older workers have been losing
25 their jobs in recent years through no fault of their own; and

26 WHEREAS, Despite the positive attributes they bring to the work
27 place, they are among the first to be laid off in downsizing or corporate
28 restructuring and they experience longer periods of unemployment, dis-
29 crimination in the hiring process and often lack access to job placement
30 services in rural communities; and

31 WHEREAS, Today's older workers have a considerable education def-
32 icit compared to their younger counterparts; about half of these workers
33 did not complete high school, and the education acquired at that time is
34 outdated; lacking computer skills and the knowledge required for the
35 modern job market, they require careful assessment to determine their
36 best skills and the most suitable training or retraining programs to help
37 them stay in the labor force or re-enter it; yet government-sponsored
38 programs often have an age 35 cut-off for eligibility, or do not adequately
39 address the needs of older learners; and

40 WHEREAS, Preparation for retirement throughout one's working life,
41 and the transition into retirement, whether abrupt or gradual, by choice
42 or not, are critical issues for both the individual and society; older workers
43 who lose their jobs in their peak earning years will not be able to save

1 enough to live well for the final third of their lives, will lose ground more
2 rapidly in their health status, and will be less able to contribute to our
3 communities; and

4 WHEREAS, The nature of work has changed rapidly over the last
5 decade; nonstandard forms of employment, part-time, contract and sea-
6 sonal jobs, self-employment, etc., often with poor security, low wages and
7 few or no benefits, have replaced many of the full-time positions workers
8 used to hold throughout their careers; and

9 WHEREAS, With inadequate income, older workers barely meet day-
10 to-day needs, let alone invest in their future by saving for retirement and
11 cannot replace pensions or investments depleted by changes in the stock
12 market, mutual funds, interest rates or Individual Retirement Accounts
13 (IRA's); and

14 WHEREAS, The youth-dominated society of the last few decades will
15 dramatically change in the future; the United States Census Bureau es-
16 timates that senior citizens will account for up to 25% of the population
17 by the year 2031; global competitiveness dictates our attention to this
18 demographic shift; the United States of America, and Kansas in particular,
19 cannot expect to maintain a trained and productive work force if the needs
20 of older workers are ignored; as a result, programs designed to continually
21 update the work skills of older Kansans are essential for a thriving future
22 economy; and

23 WHEREAS, By taking into account the long-term impact of such pro-
24 grams, a cohesive set of social policy reforms can help Kansas become
25 the best possible place to live, work and grow older: Now, therefore,

26 *Be it resolved by the House of Representatives of the State of Kansas,*
27 *the Senate concurring therein:* That the Legislature supports inclusion
28 of older job seekers as a hard-to-serve population under the Workforce
29 Investment Act and the funding of statewide worker training and em-
30 ployment services from the 15% state-level set-aside reserve; and

31 *Be it further resolved:* That the Legislature supports a requirement
32 that a portion of Workforce Investment Act funding be retained from the
33 15% state-level set-aside reserve from the Workforce Investment Act dis-
34 cretionary fund in the amount of \$200,000, and use of such moneys be
35 utilized to provide additional opportunities for the development and fund-
36 ing of special services for older workers; and

37 *Be it further resolved:* That the Legislature supports increased finan-
38 cial support for job training and retraining programs designed to serve
39 older Kansans including the Older Kansans Employment Program
40 (OKEP); and

41 *Be it further resolved:* That the Legislature urges evaluation of exist-
42 ing workforce training and retraining programs administered by the De-
43 partment of Commerce, including, but not limited to the Kansas Indus-

1 trial Training (KIT) and Kansas Industrial Retraining (KIR) programs and
2 the State of Kansas Investment in Lifelong Learning (SKILL) projects,
3 to ensure that such programs are adequately designed and properly ad-
4 ministered to meet the needs of older Kansas workers.