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December 1, 2009

The Honorable Timothy Kaine
Governor's Office
Patrick Henry Building, Third Floor
1111 East Broad Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Dear Governor Kaine:

In accordance with §2.2-2674.01 of the Code of Virginia, it is my distinct pleasure to transmit to you, on behalf of the Virginia Workforce Council, an annual report of outcomes for the Virginia Career Readiness Certificate (CRC) Program.

We have made significant progress with this initiative, and we anticipate achieving continued success. A total of 5,168 CRCs were attained in fiscal year 2009, which represents a 19 percent increase over the previous year. This accomplishment supports the goal set forth in the Governor's Workforce Development Strategic Plan to increase CRCs by 10 percent annually. In 2008, the General Assembly approved legislation establishing the CRC in the Virginia Code and authorizing funding to support it. That same year, the Virginia Workforce Council set aside seed money from federal Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Governor's Discretionary funds, which was matched by other resources and in-kind contributions. The CRC program continues to be supported by WIA funding through an allocation of \$250,000 for fiscal year 2010.

In order to elevate the profile of the CRC, we recommend that the Governor and General Assembly direct state agencies to implement the CRC as a key hiring criterion. This would significantly enhance the visibility of the certificate, and it would embrace the CRC as the valuable and effective instrument that the Governor and the Virginia Workforce Council have endorsed it to be.

We welcome your feedback and support in the coming months.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. P. Leber".

Dr. Robert P. Leber
Chairman, Virginia Workforce Council

RPL:csd

Cc: The Honorable Terry Kilgore, Chair, House Committee on Commerce and Labor
The Honorable Robert Tata, Chair, House Committee on Education
The Honorable Richard Saslaw, Chair, Senate Committee on Commerce and Labor
The Honorable Edward Houck, Chair, Senate Committee on Education and Health

Enclosure: Career Readiness Certificate Program

Virginia Career Readiness Certificate
Project Status
December 1, 2009

With support from the Virginia Workforce Council (VWC), Virginia's Career Readiness Certificate (CRC) program continues to make significant progress. The CRC is an assessment-based credential that provides employers and jobseekers with a uniform measure of key workplace skills. The basis for the CRC program is the ACT-developed skill database, which contains over 15,000 detailed job profiles that identify the necessary skills to successfully perform defined tasks for each job. By matching the job profile information with individual scores on WorkKeys® assessments, employers are equipped to make reliable decisions about hiring, training, and program development for their employees.

The Virginia Community College System (VCCS) has a 4-year agreement with the Community College Workforce Alliance (CCWA), which is the workforce development partnership of J. Sargeant Reynolds and John Tyler Community Colleges, to provide leadership for the CRC initiative. CCWA has successfully completed a number of outreach, marketing, and incentive activities during the first year of this agreement.

CCWA created a public service announcement (PSA) for the CRC featuring Governor Timothy M. Kaine, which was shown in movie theaters across the Commonwealth during the month of January 2009. This allowed approximately 2 million movie-goers to learn about the benefits that the CRC provides to both businesses and jobseekers. The PSA is currently being used at community colleges and workforce centers for local and regional marketing efforts.

Two gap-training software licenses, WIN and KeyTrain, have been purchased to provide CRC test-takers with access to Internet-based remedial tools to improve their test scores. These licenses are now available for every community college and One-Stop Center in Virginia. Five regional sessions and several webinars have been conducted to train personnel on the gap-skill programs. CCWA will also host a project session on the CRC program and provide additional training on gap-training curriculum during the Virginia Community College Hire Education Workforce Conference in December.

VCCS has contracted with ACT to allow all community colleges to participate as members of the WorkKeys Solutions Provider Network. This provides new ways for the schools to build long-term relationships with local employers and meet the needs of both learners and local businesses.

The Virginia Electronic Commerce Technology Center (VECTEC) at Christopher Newport University has redesigned and enhanced the Virginia CRC Skills Bank. This online database provides a tool for employers to search data on the skill levels of Virginia's workforce and provides employers, jobseekers, and workforce professionals with information about the CRC.

On October 9, 2009, VCCS and CCWA hosted the first CRC Summit in Richmond. This event provided the opportunity for industry and community partners to learn more about the CRC and share best practices for successful CRC implementation. The summit was well-attended by representatives from businesses, state agencies, and workforce organizations. Additional summits focusing on the CRC are expected to be held in various regions across the Commonwealth.

Through the efforts described above, the program achieved a 19 percent increase in total statewide CRC attainment since FY 2008. Below is a regional breakdown of bronze, silver, and gold CRCs awarded between July 1, 2008 and June 30, 2009.

FY 2009 Career Readiness Certificates in Virginia				
Workforce Investment Board Region	Bronze	Silver	Gold	Total CRCs
Alexandria/Arlington	13	15	10	38
Bay Consortium	52	71	26	149
Capital Region	314	630	170	1,114
Crater Area	240	355	76	671
Greater Peninsula	96	232	84	412
Hampton Roads	175	366	94	635
New River/Mount Rogers	60	233	92	385
Northern Virginia	106	255	240	601
Piedmont Workforce Network	21	38	8	67
Region 2000/Central Virginia	19	38	8	65
Shenandoah Valley	84	194	78	356
South Central Virginia	90	122	31	243
Southwest Virginia	16	49	18	83
West Piedmont	76	110	17	203
Western Virginia	37	85	24	146
STATE TOTAL	1,399	2,793	976	5,168

As demonstrated, the Commonwealth's CRC program is achieving great success. To sustain the progress that has been made, the VWC's budget for the program included a \$250,000 allocation of federal Workforce Investment Act funding to support the CRC initiative in FY 2010. These funds are being matched by other resources and in-kind contributions. In order to further propel the CRC initiative, it is recommended that the Commonwealth, as an employer, implement the use of the CRC as a key hiring criterion for all state agencies. If every state agency required that the CRC be one of the required qualifications for all classified staff positions, not only would it significantly enhance the visibility of the certificate, but it would also demonstrate that the VWC and General Assembly are utilizing the Governor's endorsed certificate. In addition to benefiting state agencies and institutions in their efforts to hire

qualified employees, the CRC can also be used to periodically assess the skills of the current workforce and identify skill gaps that can be remedied through use of the statewide gap-training software. While several very notable employers, including Northrop Grumman, Inova Health Systems, Canon Virginia, and Wyeth Pharmaceutical, play a key role in marketing the CRC's value, one of the goals during the coming year is to persuade one of the Commonwealth's largest employers to embrace the CRC as the valuable and effective instrument that the Governor and the VWC have endorsed it to be.