

October 25, 2023

The Honorable Jason Smith
Chair, Committee on Ways & Means
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

RE: 10.25.23 Hearing on “Educational Freedom and Opportunity for American Families, Students, and Workers” – American Society of Association Executives Support for H.R. 1477

Dear Chairman Smith:

On behalf of the American Society of Association Executives (ASAE), which represents nearly 50,000 association professionals across 7,000 organizations, thank you for hosting today’s hearing to examine “Educational Freedom and Opportunity for American Families, Students, and Workers.”

I write in direct support of—and urge you to advance—the bipartisan *Freedom to Invest in Tomorrow’s Workforce Act* (H.R. 1477), which would expand qualified expenses under 529 plans to include postsecondary skills training and credentialing programs, such as licenses and voluntary, nongovernmental certifications.


Representatives Rob Wittman and Abigail Spanberger champion the bill, which 75 bipartisan Members of Congress cosponsor (47 Republicans and 28 Democrats). Seven Republican Members of the Ways and Means Committee also support the proposal.

In July, ASAE and its partner, the Professional Certification Coalition, established the Tomorrow’s Workforce Coalition with the singular goal of helping enact H.R. 1477. The Tomorrow’s Workforce Coalition, which also submitted comments for the hearing record, includes more than 725 national, state and local organization members.

The legislation adds to the definition of “qualified higher education expenses” certain covered costs that individuals incur when enrolling in or attending training or credential programs, taking a certification exam or participating in continuing education activities. The legislation seeks to ensure that individuals are using 529 account funds only on programs that are legitimate and reputable, including credentialing programs that are nationally accredited. The Internal Revenue Service would consult with the Department of Labor to develop regulations or guidance to guarantee that quality is a hallmark of programs on which 529 plan funds can be spent. The *Freedom to Invest in Tomorrow’s Workforce Act* is straightforward, bipartisan and would support working families by shifting the 529 paradigm from “college savings plans” to “career savings plans.”

Thank you for convening this important hearing, for the opportunity to provide comments and for your attention to the *Freedom to Invest in Tomorrow's Workforce Act*. Please email Jeff Evans (jevans@asaecenter.org), director of public policy for the American Society of Association Executives, if you or your staff have questions.

Sincerely,



Michelle I. Mason, FASAE, CAE
President & CEO
ASAE: The Center for Association Leadership

CC

The Honorable Richard Neal
Ranking Member, Committee on Ways & Means
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Mike Thompson
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Tax Policy
Committee on Ways & Means

The Honorable Mike Kelly
Chair, Subcommittee on Tax Policy
Committee on Ways & Means

ENCLOSURE

- [Coalition and legislation one-pager](#)
- [H.R. 1477 text](#)