



November 17, 2014

Mr. Ken Levine
Sunset Advisory Commission
1501 North Congress Avenue
Robert E. Johnson Building, Sixth Floor
Austin, Texas 78701

Dear Mr. Levine:

On behalf of the Texas Workforce Investment Council (Council), we would like to extend our appreciation for the professional and collaborative manner in which the Sunset Advisory Commission staff conducted their review of the Council. The process that allowed each Council member to provide direct input through either an interview or survey response was viewed by those members as open and transparent. From the perspective of evaluating the Council's effectiveness in carrying out its statutory obligations, the review process allowed us to closely examine what we do, why we take certain actions, and how we might improve our work. While the review process seemed like a daunting one at the beginning, Sunset staff helped make the process manageable as they worked with Council staff to gather additional information and data, clarify where relevant, and question further when necessary. We appreciated the lengths to which your staff went to both understand the work of the Council, as well as to accurately represent that work in the staff report.

Council members were pleased that the report acknowledges the role and functions of the Council both in meeting federal workforce statutory requirements and in contributing to the effectiveness of the State's workforce system. The report validates our view that the Council's attachment to the Office of the Governor is critical to enabling the Council to carry out its functions from a neutral position and that any other structural placement would diminish the Council's ability to effectively facilitate planning and evaluation across eight agencies with multiple programs.

As requested in your letter dated November 7, 2014 and based on feedback from members of the Council, we offer the following written response to the recommendations in the Sunset Commission Staff Report for the Council:

Recommendation 1.1

Continue the Texas Workforce Investment Council for 12 years and align its Sunset review with that of the Texas Workforce Commission.

Wes Jurey
Chair

Sharla E. Hotchkiss
Vice Chair

Mark Barberena

Robert Cross

Mark Dunn

Carmen Olivas Graham

Thomas Halbouty

Richard Hatfield

Robert Hawkins

Kyle Janek

Larry Jeffus

Paul Jones

Matthew Maxfield

Raymund Paredes

Richard Rhodes

Jonathan Taylor

Joyce Delores Taylor

Larry Temple

Michael Williams

Lee Rector
Director

Council Response

We agree with the recommendation to continue the Council and that this will enable the state to meet federal requirements under both the Workforce Investment Act and Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. We understand and agree that the intent of this recommendation is that the Council continue to be administratively attached to the Office of the Governor. We agree that aligning future Sunset reviews of the Council with those of the Texas Workforce Commission will best serve the function of Sunset's review of Texas' workforce system because the majority of the workforce programs are housed in the Texas Workforce Commission.

Recommendation 1.2

Abolish the Texas Skill Standards Board and transfer its functions to the Texas Workforce Investment Council.

Council Response

We agree that this recommendation would effectively streamline the administration of related workforce development functions under a single entity. The Council has been charged with staffing the Texas Skill Standards Board (Board) since its inception in the mid-1990s. As such, Council staff have performed the functions of and administratively served this separate Governor-appointed board for more than 15 years. We acknowledge the important work of the Board in developing a voluntary skill standards system in Texas and believe that the Council is well positioned-in terms of its statutory responsibilities and its membership-to assume the duties of the Board, thereby eliminating the need for this separate body. Certainly, in assuming the duties the Council would continue the valuable work and contributions of the Board to Texas' workforce system by building on the successes achieved over the past decade and a half.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments in relation to the findings and recommendations in the Sunset Advisory Commission Staff Report. The Council remains dedicated to fulfilling its statutory purpose to advise the Governor and the Legislature with strategic planning for and evaluation of Texas' workforce system and programs. If you have any questions regarding our response, please do not hesitate to contact either of us at 512.936.8100.

Sincerely,



Wes Jurey
Chairman



Lee Rector
Director