



## MESSAGE FROM MK

OCTOBER 2004 – WIA REAUTHORIZATION

*An update from Mary Katherine Moen, State Director of Adult Education  
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*The following remarks are from an address presented in Washington, DC on November 16, 2003 by Robert Wedgeworth, President of ProLiteracy Worldwide. I share them here because I think he clearly lays out an appropriate course of action.*

“Attaining and maintaining high literacy levels among adults is an ongoing process, especially in the US where immigration and family mobility rates are high. Our current national focus on the children’s side of the educational and literacy equation puts enormous pressure on school systems to succeed with children whose parents lack the educational or cultural resources they need to support their children or the school. Balancing the equation requires cross-cutting strategies from our policymakers; our health, education, labor and welfare system; our prison system; and, last but not least, business and industry.”

Mr. Wedgeworth recommends reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act, Title II, and suggests a comprehensive approach:

“Building on the Action Agenda of the National Literacy Summit 2000, and consistent with the intent of the UNESCO Decade of Literacy program, Congress should develop and pass a new Adult Education and Literacy Act that:

- Creates an awareness of and recognizes the existence of the network of agencies and non-profit organizations that form the Adult Education and Literacy System (AELS) of the US
- Provides performance standards for AELS
- Provides funding that will assist new or existing agencies and organizations in meeting the performance standards
- Creates a referral system that encourages social service agencies, hospitals, labor unions, employers, and prisons to identify low-literate adults and ... refer them to AELS for training
- Provides funding to support each qualified low-literate adult who enrolls in an AELS program
- Provides a tax credit for volunteers who devote at least ten hours each month as a teacher or tutor in the AELS
- Provides a tax credit to employers who hire graduates of the AELS
- Appropriates at least \$1 billion annually for the next ten years ...”

*The goal is to reduce functional illiteracy in the US. In this way these adults will have the opportunity to become better parents, better workers, and active contributors to a democratic society. That certainly is what we are committed to here in Nevada.*