The report of the National Commission on Adult Literacy is a call to action for the United States. It highlights the importance of adult literacy and education for economic competitiveness and quality of life. The report is endorsed by various stakeholders, including corporate leaders, educators, and community college presidents, who emphasize the need for improved adult education programs to meet the demands of the 21st century workforce. The recommendations of the report are seen as crucial for ensuring the nation's ability to compete globally and maintain a vibrant economy.
R. Mark Lawrance, Sr., Vice President, Foundation and Operations, Indiana Chamber of Commerce

"The comprehensive Reach Higher, America report is a significant research project with bold recommendations to better prepare America’s workforce for the 21st century. It builds on other landmark publications such as America’s Perfect Storm and Tough Choices, Tough Times with specific actionable strategies to improve America’s global competitiveness. As leaders in Indiana look to improve our workforce training systems to elevate the quality of our workforce, we have benefited from the work of the National Commission on Adult Literacy. With much of the funding for state workforce programs originating with federal programs, we hope that the recommendations from this report will be implemented by Congress. The Commission is to be congratulated for a profound report with such far-reaching recommendations to act upon."

Hon. Ruth Ann Minner, Governor of Delaware; and Honorary Commissioner

"Now more than ever, it is important that our adult education and workforce development programs prepare learners to meet the challenges of a global economy. In Reach Higher, America, the National Commission on Adult Literacy has issued an impressive call to action to resolve adult literacy issues that threaten to undermine our national and local economies and standard of living."

Richard W. Riley, U.S. Secretary of Education 1993-2001; and Honorary Commissioner

"In my Fifth Annual State of American Education speech a decade ago, I pointed out that our nation has never been confronted with the task of teaching so much to so many while, at the same time, reaching for new high standards. I called this America’s first challenge. I was speaking about our nation’s elementary and secondary schools at the time. However, the same holds true today about the adult education and workforce skills challenge presented so compellingly by the National Commission on Adult Literacy, of which I’m an honorary member. I hope that the public and private sectors will heed the Commission’s bold new report and take the strong action recommended. Reach Higher, America makes it clear that many millions of adults in America—a huge segment of our workforce, people beyond the reach of our schools—must have basic adult education and workforce skills services on a whole new scale if they are to be productive workers in our global economy and pursue the American dream as we know it."

John Sweeney, President, AFL-CIO

"A higher focus on adult education and workforce skills training is vital to building a stronger economy that works for all. The Commission's recommendations are right on target and we wholeheartedly support them."

Marc Tucker, President, National Center on Education and the Economy

"If you are concerned about the basic skills of the young people graduating from our high schools—and you should be—you should be even more alarmed about the basic skills of the adults already in our workforce. The resources we are devoting now to giving our adult workers the basic skills they need to maintain the American standard of living for the rest of us can only be termed pathetic. This report lays out a very sensible plan for reversing course."

Andy Van Kleunen, Executive Director, The Workforce Alliance (TWA)

"Most national policy pronouncements about the ‘future American workforce’ ignore the fact that most of our nation’s future workers are adults already in today’s workforce. For America to rejoin the international skills race, we need a 21st century skills strategy that encompasses all U.S. workers, not only the small number of new workforce entrants coming out of our nation’s high schools and universities. In that regard, the National Commission on Adult Literacy has put out a call to action that every national policymaker, including those running for President, should heed. Millions of ‘middle skilled jobs’ requiring more than high school skills but less than a four-year degree could go unfilled in this country, in part, because—as the Commission documents—an even larger number of Americans lack the necessary basic literacy or language skills to train for these technical occupations. The Commission’s call for a new national investment in an integrated Adult Education and Workforce Skills strategy offers one immediate way to help address this crisis, getting millions of working adults on a pathway to learn the basic skills and ultimately earn credentials to fill these jobs. On behalf of the business, labor, college, community, and government groups that comprise our national coalition, I heartily endorse the urgency and focus of the Commission’s report."

Dan Wagner, Director, National Center on Adult Literacy/International Literacy Institute; Professor, University of Pennsylvania

"The facts in Reach Higher, America, are no longer in question. Improving adult literacy in the U.S. remains a top national priority that has continuously gone unmet over recent decades, and in an era when we can no longer afford complacency. The pressure of workforce competitiveness is growing ever steeper. This timely report lays out the problems, and a number of key solutions, such as the utility of new technologies to assist in adult and workforce training, the need for innovative and effective research-based methods, and increased and flexible modalities for funding. Now is the time to implement this strategy."

The National Commission on Adult Literacy is an independent panel of leaders from labor, business, government, education, and philanthropy. The Commission is managed by the Council for Advancement of Adult Literacy (CAAL), which works to increase business and philanthropic engagement in adult education and literacy, improve federal and state policy, and raise public awareness of the critical importance of the adult learning system to America’s future. The Commission was launched in July 2006 and funded by Dollar General Corporation, the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, the McGraw-Hill Companies, Harold W. McGraw, Jr., the Ford Foundation, and The Joyce Foundation.