

EDUCATION & LABOR COMMITTEE

Congressman George Miller, Chairman

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Press Office, 202-226-0853

**Chairman Hinojosa Statement At Subcommittee Hearing On
New Innovations and Best Practices under the Workforce
Investment Act**

WASHINGTON, D.C. – *Below are the prepared remarks of U.S. Rep. Rubén Hinojosa (D-TX), chairman of the House Subcommittee on Higher Education, Lifelong Learning, and Competitiveness, for a subcommittee field hearing on “New Innovations and Best Practices Under the Workforce Investment Act.”*

Good Morning. Welcome to the Higher Education, Lifelong Learning, and Competitiveness Subcommittee’s third hearing in preparation for the reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act. This is also our first field hearing for the 111th Congress, and I would like to personally thank Congressman Paul Tonko and the New York State Department of Education for hosting us.

The last reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act was in 1998. To say that times have changed would be an understatement. In 1997, our economy generated 3 million new jobs. Since the start of this recession in December of 2007, we have lost over 4 million jobs. In 1998, our unemployment rate was 4.5 percent. In February of this year, it hit 8.1 percent. We need to be much smarter and more innovative with our workforce investment system if we are going to turn these numbers around.

We have taken bold and swift action with the passage of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, which will infuse approximately \$4 billion into our workforce investment system. This is an opportunity and a challenge for all of the stakeholders.

The opportunity comes with the unprecedented increase in resources. There is also some new flexibility in being able to develop contracts for training to meet the community workforce needs rather than relying solely on individual training accounts. Additionally, we will be able to provide youth opportunities on a much larger scale. Most exciting is the major commitment to Green Jobs and high growth areas such as allied health.

The challenge is handling the dramatically increased number of individuals seeking services while scaling up best practices and testing innovative new ones. We need to do a much better job of putting youth and low-skilled adults on career pathways that will

enable them to answer President Obama's call to commit to one year of college or career training.

I believe that we are up to the challenge.

The testimony of today's witnesses shows that we have ideas and tested practices that work. We just need the resources and the sustained commitment to have a world-class workforce development system that works for those starting at the bottom rung of the career ladder as well as for those racing to the top.

I would like to thank our witnesses today for joining us. It is invaluable for our Subcommittee to have the opportunity to get outside of Washington and visit the communities that our federal policies and programs are intended to serve.

Thank you for hosting us and thank you for your testimony.

I would now like to yield to my good friend, a valuable new member of the Subcommittee, Rep. Paul Tonko, for an opening statement.

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