

Opening Statement – Field Hearing on New Innovations and Best Practices under the Workforce Investment Act  
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Chair  
Subcommittee on Higher Education, Lifelong Learning and Competitiveness  
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Good Morning. Welcome to the Higher Education, Lifelong Learning, and Competitiveness Subcommittee's fifth hearing in preparation for the reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act. This is also our second field hearing for the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress, and I would like to personally thank Congresswoman Dina Titus and the Nevada State College for hosting us.

These hearings are of critical importance. The last time we reauthorized the Workforce Investment Act was in 1998.

The Workforce Investment Act was designed to streamline and coordinate our job training programs. It was supposed to provide a one-stop system of workforce development that would serve workers and employers alike.

After 11 years, the system is long overdue for an upgrade, and time is of the essence. Last month, our economy shed another 539,000 jobs, bringing the total to 5.7 million jobs lost since the beginning of the recession in December 2007. Never in my lifetime, have we needed our workforce investment system to deliver more for our economy than right now.

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. It is imperative that our workforce investment system be up to the challenge.

We have much to learn from Nevada. As one of the fastest growing regions in the country, Nevada has seen its demand for many adult services, such as English as a Second language and job training, skyrocket. As one of the hardest hit by the foreclosure crisis, Nevada is on the frontlines of the economic crisis.

Today, we will hear from experts on the ground. These are the people who are working to re-connect disconnected youth, who preparing individuals for green jobs, who are addressing our workforce needs in high growth areas such as health care, and who are ensuring that individuals with disabilities are getting the vocational and rehabilitative support they need to work and live independently.

I would like to thank our witnesses today for joining us and for the work you do every day to strengthen our workforce. 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. Dina Titus, for an opening statement.