
EDUCATION & LABOR COMMITTEE

Congressman George Miller, Chairman

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**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 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 second hearing in preparation for the reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act. As with our first hearing, we are going to focus on new innovations and best practices that will improve the workforce development system.

Each day, our task to renew the Workforce Investment Act grows more urgent.

On Tuesday, President Obama called on all Americans to commit themselves to one year of college or postsecondary training.

Last week, the President signed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act to save or create 3.5 million jobs. With a nearly \$5 billion investment in our job training programs by the Department of Labor, this law places a specific priority on assistance that will offer family sustaining wages to workers who have the greatest barriers to finding employment.

Yet from our last hearing, we know that an estimated 80 – 90 million adults lack the basic education and skills to answer the President’s call or qualify for the jobs that will be created.

According to a recent analysis by Anthony Carnevale at Georgetown University’s Center on Education and the Workforce, 54 percent of these jobs will require at least some postsecondary education and high school dropouts will be eligible for only about one-fourth of them.

We will have to call upon our workforce development system that is supported through the Workforce Investment Act to bridge that gap. This will require innovation and new approaches to delivering job training and education.

In recent years, the trends have not been positive for low-income, low-skilled workers in the WIA system. According to an analysis by the Center for Law and Social Policy, the share of low-income participants who received intensive and training services under WIA dropped from 84 percent in 2000 to 53.7 percent in 2007. Likewise, the share of workers with low levels of educational attainment who received intensive or training services dropped from 77.9 percent to 68.7 percent. We need to reverse those trends.

However, there are examples of innovation and best practices across the country where job training, education, and support services have been integrated into a system of career pathways that has enabled workers to complete secondary school, learn English, and earn a postsecondary credential, facilitating their entry into higher-skilled, higher-paying jobs. We need to build on those successes.

A similar approach has shown promise with our youth programs. Under a reauthorized WIA, we have an opportunity to strengthen our youth programs to not only connect youth to the workplace but also help them establish lasting bonds to education and lifelong learning.

Our witnesses today will share with us what practices have been most successful in their experience with the workforce investment system.

Thank you for joining us. I am looking forward to your testimony.

I now yield to the Ranking Member, Mr. Brett Guthrie of Kentucky, for his opening statement.

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