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House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

HOUSE DEMOCRATIC POLICY COMMITTEE ROUNDTABLE

Topic: Workforce Development

Tec Centro – Lancaster, PA

March 6, 2018

AGENDA

3:00 p.m. Welcome and Opening Remarks

3:10 p.m. Discussion with Panelists:

- Jerry Oleksiak, Secretary, Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry
- Carlos Graupera, Executive Director, Spanish American Civic Association
- Cathy Rychalsky, Executive Director, Lancaster County Workforce Development Board
- Bob Shoemaker, Project Executive, Lancaster City Alliance
- Tom Baldrige, President & CEO, Lancaster Chamber
- Nelson Longenecker, Vice President-Business Innovation, Four Seasons Family of Companies
- Scott Fiore, Vice President/Partner, TriStarr Staffing
- Tyrone Miller, CEO, Lancaster Works
- Vanessa Philbert, Household Stability Impact Team Leader, Community Action Partnership
- Dr. Zoann Parker, Vice President for Academic Affairs, Thaddeus Stevens College of Technology
- Victor Ramos, Vice President, HACC-Lancaster and Lebanon Campuses
- Victor Rodgers, Associate Provost for Workforce Development and Continuing Education, HACC
- Matt Johnson, Mayor's Chief of Staff, City of Lancaster

4:50 p.m. Closing Remarks



Statement of Cathy Rychalsky, Executive Director
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House Democratic Caucus Policy Committee
Honorable Mike Sturla, Chairman

March 6, 2018

Mr. Chairman, members of the House Democratic Policy Committee, and guests, my name is Cathy Rychalsky. I serve as the Executive Director of the Lancaster County Workforce Development Board. Thank you for this opportunity to participate in today's roundtable discussion and to submit remarks for the record. We appreciate Representative Sturla's active participation on our local board, and for his leadership in the Plan4PA initiative.

Career pathways to jobs that can support families and keep workers and companies in Pennsylvania are essential to economic stability and growth. The workforce development system, across the nation and in Pennsylvania, is essential to creating and expanding those pathways, particularly for individuals with barriers to employment. By a near unanimous vote, Congress agreed with the overwhelming passage of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) in 2014.

As the US economy grows, investments in education and training have never been more important to help workers obtain the skills and credentials needed to take advantage of current and emerging jobs. Here in Pennsylvania, including in Lancaster County, manufacturing is a major employer. Yet, we hear consistently that there is a shortage of workers with the skills necessary to fill jobs in manufacturing, construction, and infrastructure resilience building. In partnership with employers and numerous government agencies, the local workforce development system strives to build the pipeline of worker talent needed for available jobs, many of which require more than a high school diploma, but not necessarily a traditional four-year degree.

We talk about workers as America's and Pennsylvania's greatest assets, and we need to invest in them, accordingly. At the federal level, we urge members of Congress to fund WIOA workforce and adult education grants to at least the FY2019 authorized levels. We would ask state lawmakers to join us in asking members of Congress to fund workforce development and training that matches the call for action. In short, talk is not enough. Despite messages of strong bipartisan support for skills policy, over the past 15 years, Congress has slashed funding for state job training grants by about 40 percent, career & technical education by 30 percent and adult education grants by 20 percent.

While the workforce development system is significantly federally funded, there are several state initiatives and funding sources that can boost local workforce efforts. We are encouraged that the proposed FY2018-19 state budget continues to provide funding for the newly established Manufacturing PA program within the PA Department of Community & Economic Development, and suggests an increase in funding for career & technical education in the state Department of Education.

We are also encouraged to see that the proposed state budget at least maintains flat funding for apprenticeship training, and would increase funding for the Industry Partnership Program under the PA Department of Labor & Industry. Apprenticeships are an ideal earn-and-learn opportunity. Work-based learning can be especially beneficial to workers with barriers to employment, including veterans, disadvantaged youth, and low-income workers. We support the notion of a Work Opportunity Tax Credit to support targeted investments by employers in work-based learning and training.

The Lancaster County Workforce Development Board, like all of Pennsylvania's 22 local workforce boards, have found the Industry Partnership Program — now dubbed Next Generation Partnerships — to be a catalyzing construct in which to bring workforce, businesses, and partners together from strategic planning to knowledge transfer and ultimately, to employment where jobs in demand meet skilled workers at the ready. Given the strong connection needed between workers, businesses in search of qualified workers, and post-secondary education, we are concerned that the proposed state budget shows no increase in funding for community colleges, where significant professional development and education occurs for adult learners, some of whom are not yet employed and others who want to expand their skill sets to qualify for higher-paying jobs.

Pennsylvania is already a leader at building career pathways in a correctional setting. With support from the US Department of Education "Improving Reentry Education" grant, the PA Department of Corrections is spearheading an effort to build sustainable, employer-driven career pathways that prepare inmates with in-demand skills while incarcerated, and that connect those individuals to jobs, support services, and ongoing education on release. There are many lessons here to be learned.

Individuals with criminal records face significant barriers to finding and keeping gainful employment. Studies have shown that re-entrants — meaning those who have been incarcerated and are returning to life outside of prison — are employed at a rate of 5 to 20 percent lower than the general population. Without the skills to successfully re-enter the labor market, re-entrants struggle to interrupt the cycle of recidivism. In Pennsylvania, nearly 60 percent of released inmates are re-arrested or re-incarcerated within three years of release. This must and can change with programmatic funding. Recognizing the need we have locally, the Lancaster County Workforce Development Board has made significant investments in re-entry programs.

Providing job training to re-entrants and others, though, is not enough. There needs to be a clear step-by-step career pathway, underscored by a set of goals and an understanding of how to apply training to the actual labor market. The defined path from training and education to the work experience is where the workforce development system shines brightest. We are the "boots on the ground" nexus of federal, state, and local funding and programs — where good ideas become great results through appropriate and satisfying worker placement. Our success is based on proper funding and essential collaborative partnerships.

I would like to provide two examples of how the work occurring locally is impacting individuals, families and our business community. This past summer we authorized funding for a graduating senior from Garden Spot High School to attend training at Thaddeus Stevens College of Technology. Upon completion of this course he was promoted at his place of employment and given a \$4.00/hour raise. The training and raise has allowed him to exceed the family sustaining wage.

In our Work Ready program, a program for individuals or families on public assistance, we had a gentleman who was reading and comprehending information below a sixth grade level. He was enrolled in the Integrated Education and Training Hospitality course, which we partner with the IU 13 on. This gentleman had not worked for several years and was anxious about returning to the workforce. His instructor from the IU 13,

Career Navigator and an intern with the CareerLink, provided the support and coaching he needed to be successful in the workplace. We are happy to share that he is now working as a Night Auditor at a local hotel.

The Lancaster County Workforce Development Board and its trade group, the Pennsylvania Workforce Development Association, are pleased to be part of these discussions and to have a seat at the table where policy can become practices that have real meaning to those who live and work in the commonwealth. We would be pleased to offer continuing information and assistance to you, Rep. Sturla, and members of the House Democratic Policy Committee.

Thank you.

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