Chairman Tom Cole

Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies
House Committee on Appropriations

Oversight Hearing: Examining Federal Support for Job Training Programs
April 4, 2017
Opening Statement As Prepared

Good morning. It is a pleasure to welcome our witnesses today to the Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education to discuss Job Training Programs at the Department of Labor. We look forward to hearing your testimonies.

Each year the Federal government invests over four billion dollars across multiple job training programs at the Department of Labor with the goal of helping participants acquire the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in the labor market. Yet millions of American continue to struggle to find good-paying jobs. At the same time—according to current BLS data—there are over five and a half million job openings across the country. We must look closely at the results of our Federal investments in job training programs so that we can make wise choices moving forward about how to maximize the effectiveness of limited taxpayer resources.

I look forward to hearing from our witnesses about what works in job training programs and what barriers exist to achieving greater outcomes. I hope to learn more about how this Committee can help to improve and better target investments in workforce training to ensure that participants have access to better jobs and, frankly, that businesses have access to employees with the skills needed to complete in the global market.

Today, I'm pleased to welcome the following witnesses--

Douglas Besharov is a Professor of Public Policy at the University of Maryland and a Senior Fellow at the Atlantic Council. Professor Besharov has conducted extensive research on government policy related to poverty, welfare, children and families, and workforce development. In 2011, he edited a research volume that assessed the job training programs authorized under the Workforce Investment Act. The book included extensive research and analysis of the job training programs authorized under the Workforce Investment Act, focusing more specifically on program implementation, management, and evaluation.

Demetra Smith Nightingale is a Fellow at the Urban Institute. Her research focuses on social, economic, and labor policy issues, particularly workforce development, job training, and income security. Prior to that, she served five years as the Chief Evaluation Officer at the Department of Labor leading an evidence-based clearinghouse and integrating program evaluation activities with performance management to improve program results and operational efficiency. She is also a Professorial Lecturer at the Trachtenberg School of Public Policy and Public

Administration at the George Washington University, teaching graduate courses in program evaluation, which integrates evaluation and performance management in the context of evidence-based policy.

Zoë Baird is President and CEO of the Markle Foundation. The Markle Foundation leverages information technology to drive solutions to some of the nation's most pressing problems in the areas of health, the economy, and national security. The Foundation's SKILLFUL pilot initiative in Colorado and the greater Phoenix area provides a set of online and offline tools to connect middle-skill job seekers—those with a high-school diploma and some college experience, but not a four-year degree—with employers, educators and community coaches so they can advance their careers. SKILLFUL focuses on the key skills and training needed for each job, rather than on degrees or certificates.

As a reminder to the subcommittee members and our witnesses, we will abide by the five-minute rule so that everyone will have a chance to present their testimony and ask questions. I would now like to yield to my Ranking Member, the Gentlelady from Connecticut for her opening remarks.

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