

**Full Committee Hearing: “Unleashing America’s Opportunities for Hiring and Employment”
March 28, 2023 at 10:15 a.m.**

Representative Glenn “GT” Thompson (R-PA)

1. Mr. Spear, as Co-Chair of the bipartisan House Career and Technical Education (CTE) Caucus, I am a strong supporter of CTE programs that allow learners of all ages to acquire career-oriented skills. In your testimony, you discuss how the vast majority of truck drivers obtain their credentials from the for-profit sector. **As Congress considers allowing higher education resources to go toward short-term, career-focused programs, can you explain how categorically carving out for-profit programs would harm workers in your industry?**

Thank you for the question. You asked about the effect on the trucking industry of carving out for-profit programs from eligibility for higher education resources for short-term, career-focused programs. In short, doing so would contribute to the current driver shortage. Our industry has a shortage of 78,000 drivers. If the current trend continues, that shortage could increase to 160,000 by 2031. Over the next decade, the industry must identify, recruit, educate, and put nearly 1.2 million new drivers on the road to replace those retiring or leaving, as well as those required to accommodate industry growth.

Given this, we need an all-the-above approach to workforce development. Both non-profit and for-profit education providers are needed to educate drivers for our industry. We can’t eliminate one legitimate education path based solely on the tax status of the education provider. If that provider is doing a good job, its tax status should be irrelevant regarding eligibility for higher education resources.

Categorically excluding for-profit institutions from eligibility for Career and Technical Education programs would mean Congress has not done its part to remove barriers to education—education that leads to good jobs that pay family-sustaining wages.

As I noted in my written testimony, several of our members have established and funded their own truck driver schools (some outsource their programs but subsidize them for recruited drivers). There is no reason a truck driver educated at a for-profit motor carrier’s truck driver school is any less knowledgeable or prepared than a truck driver educated at a non-profit or community college program or an unaffiliated school. Indeed, given the driver shortage, trucking companies are incentivized to educate new drivers quickly and ensure they receive a superior education.

The vast majority of drivers in our industry obtain their credentials from the for-profit sector. By denying these vital workforce partners access to the workforce system, Congress is inherently discriminating against those workers most in need of financial support for a career in trucking.

To reiterate, we need an all-of-the-above approach to workforce development. Congress should not discriminate against a particular type of education program based solely on its tax status. Our economy needs a stable pipeline of new drivers. Both non-profit and for-profit education providers have a role in filling this pipeline.