

**Written Responses To Questions Received Regarding The February 5, 2025,
Committee on Education and Workforce hearing titled “The State of
American Education”**

Representative Rick Allen (R-GA)

1) Question: Mr. Taylor, how can the higher education community better support these efforts and adapt to the growing demand for skills-based career pathways?

Answer:

The evolving landscape of work necessitates the continuous development of new skills. Higher education can play a significant role in supporting skills-based career pathways, and we’re seeing these efforts already underway, particularly across community colleges. This involves working with employers to identify the specific skills most in demand and then building out programs and courses designed to provide competencies tied to those skills as well as the critical aspect of validating those competencies. This allows employers to more effectively deploy skills-based hiring initiatives.

According to SHRM’s 2024 Talent Trends Survey, 1 in 4 organizations report that full-time regular positions they’ve hired for in the last 12 months have required new skills. While the top two reasons driving these new skill requirements are organizational growth (55%) and changing technology (51%), 3 in 4 report that it has been somewhat or very difficult to find qualified individuals with the new skills they need.

Groups such as the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) have been working with community colleges on ways to promote these best practices, including through this recent [skills-based hiring playbook](#). However, community colleges aren’t the only institutions able to play a role. Four-year colleges and universities can provide new pathways through validated micro-credentials and badges and other forms of competency efforts which often can go along with traditional degrees and offer expanded opportunities and job mobility for students.

2) Question: Mr. Taylor, as employers across the country are struggling to recruit the skilled workforce they need, do you believe the limited amount of training currently provided through WIOA negatively affects employer awareness of the public workforce system and their willingness to engage?



Answer:

Yes, and SHRM has advocated for changes to WIOA, as reflected in the bipartisan legislation passed in the House last Congress, which would have ensured that a majority of funds would be directed toward training. We also supported shifting a portion of H1B visa fees to support individual training accounts (ITA) for dislocated workers as another way in which WIOA can vastly expand training opportunities that will benefit not only more Americans but also employers who are struggling to find workers who have the skills necessary to fill open jobs.

If employers see this system meeting their needs, it is far more likely they will be invested in these programs.

Representative Burgess Owens (R-UT)

1) **Question:** Mr. Taylor, in Utah, our state has been very successful for many years integrating our workforce system with other forms of state-provided assistance to better support workers in our state. We've had a waiver under WIOA to help make this happen. I introduced a bill last Congress called the *One Door to Work Act*, which would expand this flexibility to additional states. I intend to introduce that bill again this Congress. A version of it was included in the bipartisan, bicameral WIOA agreement that was reached late last year. Can you talk about how better integration of services at the state level can improve outcomes for workers?

Answer:

As more and more states expand their efforts around workforce development, it is critical that WIOA can be used to leverage these investments effectively. Your legislation, which SHRM supported as part of the broader WIOA reauthorization, provides an excellent way for states to demonstrate ways in which they could help with the integration of these efforts to not only improve delivery – but also expand the number of individuals served and strive for much higher outcomes. We stand ready to work with you and other Members who have pushed for this flexibility and when enacted, help states integrate new and innovative strategies around an integrated and accountable workforce system.