

**Statement for the Record from
REPRESENTATIVE GREGORIO KILILI CAMACHO SABLAN**

**Committee on Education and the Workforce
Higher Education, Elementary, and Workforce Development Subcommittee
Hearing:**

**"Strengthening WIOA: Improving Outcomes for Jobseekers, Employers, and
Taxpayers"**

**Wednesday, September 20, 2023
10:15 a.m.**

**Statement on Inclusion of H.R. 3193 – *Employment Services and Jobs Parity Act* in WIOA
Reauthorization (to amend the Wagner-Peyser Act to include the Commonwealth of the
Northern Mariana Islands and American Samoa)**

I'd like to focus on an issue of significant importance to me and my district, which is including the Northern Mariana Islands and American Samoa under the Wagner-Peyser Act. This has been a longstanding priority of mine, along with Congresswoman Radewagen.

Our legislation, the *Employment Services and Jobs Parity Act*, would fill a critical gap in the workforce development services we are able to provide employees by extending the fundamental Federal Employment Service to the only two remaining U.S. jurisdictions currently unable to participate in the program.

The Employment Service has grown to become a critical part of the workforce development system under WIOA. In the Northern Marianas, the support that would be administered through the program with increasing employment opportunities for all workers and meeting the needs of the businesses in our communities is needed more now than ever before. We have *thousands* of workers who are, or will be, impacted by the unique touchback requirements of the CW-1 visa program and the end of the program in 2029. This is coupled with the impact of the end of pandemic assistance, resulting in the loss of jobs for hundreds of local government workers whose salaries relied on ARPA funds.

Exclusion under the Wagner-Peyser Act not only means being ineligible to participate in the Employment Service, but also means exclusion from other critical programs including the Work Opportunity Tax Credit and the Jobs for Veterans State Grants Program. This is just *unfathomable* given the duty we have to support the needs of military servicemembers, veterans, and their families in the U.S. Pacific region.

I have been told in the past that the Marianas and American Samoa cannot be included in the Employment Service because they do not pay into the Unemployment Trust Fund. This is *despite* there being an existing statutory exclusion which benefits one territory that also does not pay into the Trust Fund.

I am not asking for a handout. What I am asking for is equity. What I am asking for are resources to help United States Citizens, and to support their ability to find meaningful work; and for our businesses to operate.

As we consider strengthening WIOA– Chairman Owens, Ranking Member Wilson, Chairwoman Foxx, and Ranking Member Scott – I ask for you to please work with me and Congresswoman Radewagen to empower workers, and finally make inclusion of our districts under Wagner-Peyser a reality.

Thank you.