Committee on Energy and Commerce

Opening Statement of Subcommittee on Consumer Protection and Commerce Vice Chairman Tony Cárdenas

Inclusion in Tech: How Diversity Benefits All Americans

Wednesday, March 6, 2019

Remarks as Prepared for Delivery

Thank you, Chairwoman Schakowsky. It's no secret that the tech industry has a diversity problem. Every day we're seeing more and more unintended consequences when companies lack a diverse body of employees. We're seeing fitness trackers for example that have problems with dark skin. Virtual assistants like Alex having a hard time recognizing accents.

Something else that's no secret – but might still be news to some people – diversity is good for business.

The Hispanic community in America has a buying power annually of upwards of $1.5 trillion. Hispanics have high brand loyalty. It's good for business to have diversity, especially when it comes to Hispanics.

Reports show that companies with more diversity among senior executives were 33% more likely to see an increase in their bottom-line.

When you have diverse backgrounds and experiences among your employees, you spur innovation. You avoid accidentally embedding bias into your products. You avoid turning your back on a whole group of Americans.

So how do we solve this problem?

I'll say this - a sharp, Princeton-educated computer engineer recently told me she heard her coworker say that women and people of color dilute the talent pool for tech companies. Not only is that false – it's highly offensive. I myself am an engineer by training. We have a problematic culture in the tech industry when diversity is not only NOT prioritized – it's seen as a hinderance. And nothing can be further from the truth.

Let's make technology work for all Americans and also help businesses succeed.

I yield back my time to the Chairwoman.