

**Opening Statement of Subcommittee Republican Leader
Cathy McMorris Rodgers
Subcommittee on Consumer Protection and Commerce
“Inclusion in Tech: How Diversity Benefits All Americans”
March 6, 2019
*As Prepared for Delivery***

Good morning.

Today we are focused on an issue I have led on for quite some time: diversity in the tech industry.

Today, we will have an opportunity to give credit where credit is due, while also exploring how we continue to do better...especially where we can continue to improve where we recruit, retain, and promote a more diverse workforce.

I want to thank Chair Schakowsky for organizing this hearing today and for including all the voices at the table.

I also would like to recognize my good friend from Illinois, Robin Kelly.

In 2015, we launched the Diversifying Technology Caucus aimed at getting more women, people with disabilities, minorities, and veterans into the tech sector.

I want to thank Ms. Kelly for working with me to promote more opportunities for all in the tech sector.

This is an exciting time in America. Because of our work on tax reform and to lift the regulatory burden our economy is booming. After a decade of Americans asking, “where are the jobs?” wages are rising and there are more jobs available than people looking for work.

As the Wall Street Journal just reported, women are driving the labor-force comeback.

In addition, a record number of African Americans, Hispanics, and people with disabilities are coming off the sidelines and finding work.

It means that more people are finding opportunities for a better life in healthcare, energy, construction, the service industry and more.

Today’s hearing is about ensuring more individuals have opportunities to pursue and advance careers in the tech industry too.

The creation of one high tech job is projected to create 4.3 other jobs in a local economy.

Because a job is the opportunity it’s vital that these opportunities are available to people of all walks of life.

A vibrant and dynamic workplace with women, people of color, people with disabilities, and more reflects the promise of America where no matter who you are, you can achieve your version of the American dream.

Often times it may look different and I'm excited about more opportunities for those with disabilities to work because of more commitments to accommodations and job coaches.

Employing people with disabilities fosters innovation and it creates a stronger workplace culture.

Many tech companies are leading in hiring people on the autism spectrum because of their unique abilities for attention to detail, and abilities to detect patterns.

Take a software testing company called, ULTRA Testing. The founder's wife one day told him:

“We spend all this time focused on things these children may never be good at but we spend no time nurturing the skills they already have a talent for – isn't that a shame?”

He agreed, and got to work hiring people with autism to leverage their strengths. Now ULTRA Testing, a startup, is outperforming bigger companies in software quality assurance.

This month we are also celebrating Women's History Month.

It's a time to celebrate the women who are leading in tech being disruptors and inspiring our next generation of transformational women leaders.

Again, it may look different. Women have different leadership styles.

And research is showing that we have greater understanding for teams and systems and we foster a healthy workplace culture.

When women are not leading at the table... our perspectives and our voices aren't represented.

[A study](#) by McKinsey shows that companies with women in executive positions outperformed the average profitability of their industries by 21%.

Tech companies that don't open the door for women to shine and be decision makers risk being left behind.

Yes, that means hiring more women but it also means fostering an environment focused on retention and the promotion of women too.

America is leading the world in innovation.

Every single day, entrepreneurs from all walks of life are taking an idea making it a reality and creating more opportunities for hardworking people across the country.

Again, that's the Promise of America. It's not the promise for just some people or the somebodies in Silicon Valley. It's a promise for everyone.

When we celebrate every person's strengths and abilities and embrace what every person has to offer we are living up to that promise.

I recognize there's been tremendous efforts like recruiting more girls into STEM and hiring people with disabilities, like at ULTRA Testing.

We need to continue to do more to address the pipeline, whether it's young people of every background and girls in elementary and middle school... and exceptional people with disabilities.

We also need to focus on how we retain those individuals once they are recruited and do more to encourage their promotion to leadership positions.

So today, I look forward to hearing how the tech industry is leading on this and where you can also do better.

Thank you to our witnesses.

I yield back.