

*TESTIMONY OF PHILADELPHIA COUNCIL AFL-CIO PRESIDENT PATRICK J. EIDING TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS 2/26/2018*

Good Morning and thank you for the opportunity to discuss Workforce Development.

My name is Pat Eiding and I am the President of the Philadelphia Council AFL-CIO – representing 150,000 working people.

I am proud to say that I have been on the board of Philadelphia Works Inc. (PWI) since 2002 and am currently on the Executive Committee. I also have the pleasure of serving on the board of the Pennsylvania Workforce Development Board and as the only labor person on the board of National Association of Workforce Board (NAWB). NAWB's main role in D.C. is to lobby for jobs and the money to fund Workforce Boards across the Country.

Since the focus of this hearing is on Workforce Development, I must begin by requesting that you and your colleagues in both chambers continue to fund the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act (WIOA), I also would ask that you maintain the conditions for Pell grants that allow for the ability to benefit without the need to have a high school diploma before you use a Pell grant. (ie: community college and other training programs)

Programs: Programs that are Pell for skill development in short term programs. Also, I would ask that we maintain the focus on Registered Apprentice Programs. Additionally, we will need more money for Adults For infrastructure jobs training.

One of my biggest concerns is the level of proficiency in math and readings our students are graduating with. In some cases, even graduates of CTE schools are at a sixth or seventh grade level for both reading and math. We need to increase education funding for these programs to better prepare these students for graduation.

The Building Trades have some of the best training programs in the Country, but our kids can't qualify for the Apprentice Program. This is also a problem at the Shipyard Apprentice Program.

At seventh grade math and reading a young person would not be able to keep up with the training needed to become a journey person.

Finally, we need more engagement and commitment from employers both large and small so that we can perform the special training needed to be their employees such as internships and apprenticeships. Where we have meaningful collaboration, we create life-sustaining jobs.

Areas of concern should include re-entry persons and veterans: Helping to fund the very successful Helmets to Hardhats program is a good example.

Thank you for this opportunity and I offer any help I can be to foster economic development.