

**House Committee on the Budget
Members' Day
March 6, 2019**

Congresswoman Carol Miller (WV-3)

Thank you Chairman Yarmuth and Ranking Member Womack. It is a pleasure to be here.

Today, I want to speak about issues critical to my district and the importance of having a budget that supports the health and wellbeing of our communities while also being good stewards of taxpayers' dollars. I would like to focus my remarks on three central areas: Career and Technical Education, the energy industry, and infrastructure.

Across the United States, Career and Technical Education programs, known as CTE, have helped prepare students for the workforce. I am sure many of you have seen it within your own districts. These programs take what students are learning in the classroom and give them real world applications by developing skills needed to enter the working world once they leave high school. In my home state of West Virginia, 37% of all students have completed at least one CTE program and have earned more than 14,000 industry recognized credentials. Further, students who participate in CTE programs are more likely to graduate high school as well. Whether during high school or after as part of a continuing education, investing in CTE will help equip our children and grandchildren with the skills and knowledge they need to succeed. The demand for a skilled and educated workforce is continuing to grow, and programs like CTE help ensure we have people ready to succeed in our economy.

It's no secret that the opioid crisis is devastating communities around the country and especially my home state in West Virginia, it has torn families apart and taken too many of our children. Along with the toll taken on families and individuals, our opioid epidemic has taken too many individuals out of the

workforce. In addition to preparing students to enter the workforce, programs like CTE can help give people plans for the future, hope outside of drugs, and keep our students on a path towards success.

I also want to stress the importance for any proposed budget to protect our energy industry and those who work in it. West Virginia is an energy state – it employs our people and powers our communities. The previous Administration instituted regulations that devastated the coal industry in my state and eliminated many precious jobs. We cannot go back down that road.

That is why I am worried about proposals like the Green New Deal. I urge the Committee to not consider overreaching proposals such as this when crafting the budget for Fiscal Year 2020. Plans like the Green New Deal pose an imminent threat to the economy of my state and the livelihoods of my constituents. In West Virginia, nearly 30,000 people work in the energy industry and 93% of our electricity comes from coal. I urge the Committee to reject any proposals that would regulate the energy industry out of business. We all have a duty to protect our planet and leave our home better than we found it for our children and grandchildren, so let's incentivize innovation, not taxation or regulation, when it comes to protecting our environment. We've lifted so many people out of poverty and built the America of the 21st century, but we still have so much more to do. In my district, companies are beginning to work on taking previously toxic material, and transforming it into inert rock, pure clean water, and rare earth elements used in everything from pacemakers to cell phones. Again, we need a budget that incentivizes innovation and can deliver real solutions that we can implement today.

Finally, I ask the Committee to include money for infrastructure in the Fiscal Year 2020 budget. Across the United States, we have crumbling roads and bridges. My district lacks easy access to highways and interstates, which makes it difficult for my constituents from the most rural parts of the Third District to access services in more populous areas of the state. We need to innovate our infrastructure and invest in our roads, railways, and rivers to connect our state and transport our resources. There is a great need all

across the country to improve and maintain thoroughfares while also enhancing safety. Any federal money towards infrastructure can have a positive economic impact in our local communities through increasing growth and creating jobs.

When discussing infrastructure, I also ask the Committee to consider the inclusion of rural broadband in the Fiscal Year 2020 budget. Many communities across the United States lack reliable access to the internet. I was pleased to see Facebook's announcement this week that it will be laying 275 miles of fiber in West Virginia. I know Governor Justice and Senator Capito worked tirelessly on bringing this project to fruition, and I hope we can continue efforts like this across the United States. Increasing connectivity in rural America can preserve the rural way of life while also growing local economies, delivering a quality education, promoting tourism, and enhancing telehealth.

Thank you again Chairman Yarmuth and Ranking Member Womack.