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# House Subcommittee Chair Tells Workforce Directors Training Programs “Don’t Work”

By Kathy Amoroso Wiggins and Megan Cardiff

“Federal training programs don’t work!” Congresswoman Virginia Foxx, Chair of the House Subcommittee on Higher Education and Workforce Training for the Committee on Education and the Workforce, told over 60 mayors’ workforce development representatives at the 23rd Annual U.S. Conference of Mayors Workforce Development Council (WDC) Congressional Forum in Washington, D.C. on September 13. “I am no fan of the federal government being involved in education. And I use the word education, because I don’t like the word training when it comes to human beings. You train animals...you educate people. If I had my way, there wouldn’t be any federal job training programs,” she told Forum participants.

“According to a recent GAO report, we have too many federal job training programs,” Foxx said, “and we have almost no data to show us which of the

programs work. Workforce education programs can be moved to the local level. Money needs to stay at the local and state level and we need to run programs to fit the communities these programs serve.”

WDC members pushed back in response to the Congresswoman’s remarks. “Under WIA, we are one of the few federal programs with measurable outcomes,” said Steve Corona, President and CEO of Job Works and former WDC President. “How many folks we are placing in employment, their job retention and whether or not they saw increased wages are all reporting requirements for us. With respect to data on the success of our programs – we have it and we will share it with you!”

“We deal with outcome measures to show you a real-time report,” said Rick Beasley, Executive Director of the South Florida Workforce Investment Board (WIB). “We don’t look at process measures. We’re all people who put people to work.”



**Left to right, WDC President and CEO of Capital Workforce Partners in Hartford Tom Phillips, Congresswoman Virginia Foxx (NC), and WDC Second Vice-President and CEO of Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County Marlena Sessions.**

“In Seattle, we aligned our work with 11 community and technical colleges last year to invest in a cohort model. Through this collaborative partnership, we placed 260 people in jobs making \$22-25 an hour. We have the data to show our programs are working,” said WDC 2nd Vice President Marlena Sessions, CEO of the Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County.

Gerri Fiala, Employment and Training Administration Deputy Assistant Secretary at the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), outlined President Obama’s new-

ly-released American Jobs Act for WDC members during the Forum pre-conference session the day before, declaring the bill is “a real vote of confidence for the workforce development system.” Fiala emphasized that the President’s jobs bill will “put people back to work!” She detailed the proposed \$6.5 billion in the American Jobs Act to support the Pathways Back to Work and Summer Jobs programs under DOL as key local initiatives to create jobs.