



REMARKS

House Committee on Education and Labor

Chairman Robert C. "Bobby" Scott

Opening Remarks of Chairman Robert C. "Bobby" Scott (VA-03)

Virginia Career Works Hampton Center Roundtable

August 3, 2022 | 10:00 a.m.

Good morning. Thank you to the Virginia Career Works Hampton Center for hosting today's round table and showcasing your important work.

I want to begin by congratulating Shawn, Chair Olson, Vice Chair John, and the entire team at the Hampton Roads Workforce Council on receiving an \$11 million grant through the Biden-Harris Administration's Good Jobs Challenge. This funding comes from the American Rescue Plan, which Congressional Democrats passed in March of last year.

For years, the Hampton Roads Workforce Council has been a leader in helping workers gain the basic skills they need for new jobs. Now, through this \$11 million investment, the Hampton Roads Workforce Council will be able to move beyond the currently available entry-level programs and provide students with the advanced skills they need to gain higher-paying, long-term careers.

Notably, the grant will allow the Hampton Road Workforce Council to expand training labs, develop advanced curriculum, and recruit participants from historically underserved communities.

Through these expanded services, the Hampton Roads Workforce Council is expecting to be able to match at least 750 Virginians to new maritime employment opportunities, which is critical to our region's economic strength.

Simply put, this grant will help workers gain advanced skills that lead to long-term, rewarding careers, and ensure businesses have skilled professionals on the job.

Today's announcement demonstrates the shared commitment—from the Biden-Harris Administration and Congressional Democrats—to supporting workforce development programs.

In May, I led the House in passing the *Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2022*, which would deliver \$1.5 billion to Virginia's workforce development programs—like those we toured this morning—over the next six years.

Specifically, this \$1.5 billion investment will:

- Help community colleges, like VPCC, work with local employers in developing and offering job training programs;
- Expand Virginians' access to adult and basic education programs to help increase adult literacy and other foundational skills that workers need to compete in the modern economy;

- Fully fund the infrastructure costs needed to keep American Job Centers—like this one—open so Virginians can benefit from the great services offered by career services staff;
- Ensure that our country’s veterans are given priority in receiving career and training services;
- Require local workforce boards to further support historically underserved and marginalized individuals so they are given the resources needed to equitably compete in Virginia’s workforce; and,
- Finally, this investment will help prepare more workers to join the ship building industry—which is critical to our local economy.

At a time when millions of workers are looking for higher-paying careers, and businesses are looking for highly skilled workers, this investment in Virginia’s workforce system that will ensure both workers and employers get the support they need.

So, thank you to everyone joining this morning for your commitment to building a strong workforce. Thank you, again, to the Hampton Roads Workforce Council for all you do to prepare Virginians for a rewarding career.

I am confident that, together, we can prepare workers for rewarding careers, and ensure employers have access to a qualified workforce.