

Opening Statement of Ranking Member Frederica Wilson (FL-24)

Subcommittee on Higher Education and Workforce Development

"Strengthening WIOA: Improving Outcomes for Jobseekers, Employers, and Taxpayers"

2175 Rayburn House Office Building

Wednesday, September 20, 2023 | 10:15 a.m.

Thank you. Thank you so much, Chairman Owens, and thank you to the witnesses for your testimonies today.

And welcome.

Thanks to the investments made by Congressional Democrats and the Biden administration, the past two years were the first and second largest job growth years in American history.

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Without a doubt, this has been monumental for American workers, for their families, and for the economy.

In fact, our economy has added more than 13 million jobs since President Biden took office.

According to the Economic Policy Institute, low-wage workers experienced the fastest real wage growth seen since during any business cycle peak since 1979.

This historic growth was made possible by the *American Rescue Plan (ARPA)*, the *Inflation Reduction Act*, and the work of Democrats to build the economy from the bottom up and middle out. These laws secured historic investments to help vulnerable workers, accelerated economic growth, and lowered the cost for every day families.

Democrats remain focused on building the economy from the bottom up and the middle out.

To build on this progress, we can help Americans access and benefit from these new job opportunities by fully investing in our workforce system, reducing barriers for underserved workers, and improving the quality of job opportunities.

If we want to improve outcomes for job seekers, employers, and taxpayers, we must put serious money behind the *Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act* while simultaneously holding training providers and workforce boards accountable. Young people, workers forced out of their jobs, and justice-involved individuals are counting on us to work together to improve the workforce system and to meet the demand of the millions of new high-skill, high wage jobs.

With that Mr. Chair, I yield back, and I look forward to a productive discussion. Thank you.