

coverage is meaningful and really leads to access to a doctor for every American.

Republicans have ideas on how to do this. It incorporates three basic principles: Information for you to make decisions for your family or for your small business, to make cost comparisons, to create transparency, information among physicians so that we don't duplicate tests and run up the costs. These are all important things. Information is very important throughout the system and we believe that we can incorporate this in a very cost-effective way.

Secondly, choice. Americans want choices. They like to shop. Let's give Americans a wide range of choices to meet their family needs or their small business needs in health care. If we do that, that will create competition and that will start to drive the costs down of health insurance premiums which we're all struggling with. It will make it more affordable and we'll get more people on it. We can address the uninsured by targeting our response as one of the previous speakers said.

Finally, we need to put families back in control of their health care destiny. There should be nothing between the doctor and the patient in this. That's the essence of good, high quality health care, and that's the only way we're going to control the cost ultimately, by fostering and strengthening that doctor-patient relationship and making it something that every American has. That's how we'll fix health care. Republicans have those ideas and many more and we'll be glad to share them as this debate goes further with the American public.

INTRODUCING THE ADULT EDUCATION AND ECONOMIC GROWTH ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HINOJOSA) for 5 minutes.

Mr. HINOJOSA. Mr. Speaker, I stand before you as a member of the Education and Labor Committee. It is a pleasure to stand before you today to speak about the Adult Education and Economic Growth Act of 2009, known as H.R. 3238, legislation that my friend and colleague Representative PATRICK KENNEDY of Rhode Island and I introduced on Thursday, July 16, 2009.

As we all know, our Nation is facing one of the most difficult economic times in history. Technology and globalization, coupled with the economic recession, are causing low-wage and low-skilled workers to become particularly vulnerable. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, unemployment among individuals with less than a high school diploma has risen from 7½ percent in December of 2007 to almost 15 percent in April 2009. The unemployment rate for high school graduates with no college degree has increased from 4.6 percent to 9.3 percent. Currently, the U.S. ranks 11th among

OECD countries in the percent of young adults with a high school diploma. We should be especially concerned that we are the only country in which younger adults are less educated than the previous generation. More than 40 million adults across our country have basic skills needs or limited proficiency in English that keep them from participating fully in work, in family and community activities.

In 2007, more than 25 million adults ages 18 to 64 had no high school credential. In 2006, 18,400,000 adults spoke English less than "very well" according to the U.S. Census Bureau. In my congressional district alone, there are 154,000 adults without a high school diploma. In addition, another 444,000 adults speak a language other than English or do not speak English "very well." In Texas, we have 3.8 million adults who do not have a high school diploma. This is unacceptable. We must do much more to educate our adult learners and assist them in acquiring the 21st century skills they need to succeed in the workplace.

In my conversations with business leaders in my congressional district and across the country, they have shared their desire for a highly educated and trained workforce. Employers need highly skilled workers to compete globally, particularly in high-growth industries and occupations such as health care.

Despite these alarming statistics and realities, we have not made adequate investments in our adult education delivery system. Our adult education and workforce training delivery systems are in great need of reform. In many States, thousands of adult learners are experiencing long waiting lists for adult literacy services to increase their basic literacy skills or improve their English skills. More than 77 percent of community-based literacy programs currently report waiting lists. Current funding reaches only 2.8 million of these adults each year and thousands more are on those waiting lists that I mentioned for adult literacy services.

A report issued this month by the President's Council on Economic Advisers, *Preparing the Workers of Today for the Jobs of Tomorrow*, underscores that our modern economy requires workers with higher skills and the need to employ workers with education and training beyond the high school level.

In closing, I want to say that the report identifies key limitations to our education and training system, including low completion rates, limited accountability, poor coordination among different programs and excessive bureaucratic restrictions on the use of training funds.

If we are to remain competitive in the global economy, we must invest in high quality adult education and workforce training programs that lead to family-sustaining jobs in careers with the promise of advancement and post-secondary education.

Mr. Speaker, I invite Members of Congress on both sides of the aisle to

sign on as cosponsors to this legislation.

The "Adult Education and Economic Growth Act," H.R. 3238, strengthens our adult education and workforce training systems, increases economic growth in local communities and supports President Obama's call to once again lead the world college degrees by 2020.

This legislation provides adult learners with greater access to obtain basic literacy or workplace skills, including English as a Second Language. This bill assists adults in gaining admission to job training programs and post-secondary education.

This legislation provides adequate resources for innovative educational and workforce programs, so that states can bridge the gap between adult education and occupational skills training. Our adult learners will be better served by having access to integrated approaches to education and workforce training.

This legislation expands access by ensuring that federal funding formulas accurately take into account the adult education and workforce skills needs of individual states, including the number of adults who are limited English proficient.

This legislation increases access to adult education, literacy, and workplace skills through the use of technology.

This legislation increases access to correctional educational programs and provides added accountability in the system.

This legislation invests in lower skilled workers by providing employers with a tax credit.

We must reform our adult education and workforce delivery systems if we are to provide adults with the educational opportunities and 21st century skills needed to acquire family-sustaining wages and remain globally competitive.

JOB CREATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. LEWIS) for 2½ minutes.

Mr. LEWIS of California. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise today to express the deepest concern for the fact that unemployment rates have risen to 13.7 percent in the Inland Empire. There are those who believe that the solution to almost every problem facing America involves more government spending here in Washington. I am committed to the fact that just the opposite is the case. We must do everything that we possibly can to create a taxing system that encourages private sector growth.

The sooner we get back to the point of creating job opportunities in the private sector and recognizing that growth of government for the sake of government is not the answer, the sooner we will solve this problem. The jobs for San Bernardino and Riverside County lie in the private sector. So let's create an environment of opportunity and hope for those who are looking for jobs for the future.

COMBATING ADULT ILLITERACY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. KENNEDY) for 3 minutes.