

**Education & Labor Member Day Testimony**  
**April 22nd, 2021**  
**Representative Angie Craig (MN-02)**

Thank you Chairman Scott for recognizing me and holding today's Member Day Hearing.

I am grateful for all of the work this committee does on behalf of the American people, and look forward to continuing to serve alongside each of you.

Before running for Congress, I spent several years leading a workforce at a Minnesota healthcare manufacturer, responsible for approximately 4,000 jobs in the state. Some of those positions required two-year or four-year college degrees – and many offered high-paying jobs that did not.

My position at that company – and my interactions with constituents in the years since – have solidified my belief that, while a four-year degree is right for some folks, it's not the right path for everyone. A lot of folks, like my oldest son Josh, are much more interested in pursuing a technical education or learning on the job.

I appear before you today as a proud member of the bipartisan Career and Technical Education Caucus to urge the Committee to prioritize and invest in career and technical education and apprenticeships.

As our country continues to endure the economic challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic and economic crisis, we must continue

to think about how we put people back to work in the jobs that build our communities and critical American infrastructure.

One of the most important ways that we can emerge stronger from this crisis is by investing in career and technical educational institutions and apprenticeship opportunities across the United States.

I am a proud cosponsor of the National Apprenticeship Act of 2021 and the Relaunching America's Workforce Act; and I commend this committee for their work on these important bills. We need to get these bills across the finish line so the thousands of Minnesotans and millions of Americans— young and old — who have lost jobs, had hours cut, or been forced to change careers because of COVID-19 can access these programs and jobs.

I have also introduced a bipartisan bill that makes these investments and hones in on provisions in the National Apprenticeship Act. My bill, the Supporting Apprenticeship Colleges Act of 2021 would provide community grants for apprenticeship colleges — and specifically includes institutions who are typically left out of traditional higher education grant programs.

These funds would be used to expand and support outreach to potential students and employers and invest in academic advising and student support programs at apprenticeship colleges. Specifically, these funds would prioritize programs that address common barriers to completion for low-income students such as childcare, support for first-generation students

and other programs. I was proud to work in collaboration with local leaders such as the Finishing Trades Institute of the Upper Midwest to introduce this legislation.

We need to make sure more people have a chance to share in the benefits of and contribute to a growing 21st-century economy. Because registered apprenticeship and career and technical education programs have helped build the middle class in this country – and if we want to succeed in growing and strengthening our economy, we must give them the support they need and deserve.

I have heard directly from my local communities about the need for these investments and the prioritization of career and technical education as we emerge from this ongoing economic crisis. I would urge this committee to continue and enhance their work

Thank you again for all of your work on this committee and for allowing me to speak today.