



OPPORTUNITY AMERICA

CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION: THE EMPLOYER PERSPECTIVE SENATE BRIEFING

In February 2016, Opportunity America organized a briefing for congressional staffers: *Career and Technical Education: The Employer Perspective*. A range of employers from industries that rely on skilled and middle-skilled workers explained how their businesses provide career education and training or partner with schools to provide it. The event was cosponsored by the Senate CTE Caucus, the Association for Career and Technical Education and the Industry Workforce Needs Coalition. Senate CTE Caucus co-chairs Tim Kaine (D-VA), Rob Portman (R-OH) and Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) delivered remarks. Opportunity America president Tamar Jacoby moderated the discussion.



Tim Kaine U.S. Senator from Virginia

"We have done a disservice to education and what education should be by saying that everybody has to go to college. Everybody in today's workforce needs skills and high-quality credentials. But they don't always have to come from a traditional college."

Tamar Jacoby president, Opportunity America

"Most career educators agree that it's essential to get employers involved. The problem is that employers are from Mars and educators are from Venus, and it can be maddeningly difficult to get them to cooperate and collaborate . . . Today's panel is made up of employers who do cooperate and collaborate with educators – successfully."



Ed Dalrymple Jr. president, Cedar Mountain Stone Corporation and Chemung Contracting Corporation

Cedar Mountain and Chemung are small paving and construction companies in northern Virginia that partner with a local community college to sponsor an apprenticeship program.

"We made the decision that the best way to solve our workforce problem was with apprenticeship. The apprentices work during the day and study at night. The starting wage is \$35,000. When they graduate in four years, they'll be making \$100,000. They'll also have an associate's degree and the ability to transfer to a four-year college."



Carol Conslato director of Queens public affairs, Con Edison



The giant utility Con Edison provides gas, electricity and steam to more than 3 million customers in the New York metro area. In 2011, the company partnered with the New York public school system and the City University of New York to launch a pioneering “early college high school.”

"We worked hard to develop a curriculum to prepare students to work in the energy field. There was nothing like that on the market, so we partnered with CUNY to create it. The curriculum starts in high school and continues through an associate's degree. The first juniors will be eligible for internships at Con Ed this summer."

Dan Conroy former VP of Human Resources, Nexen Group

Nexen Group is a 125-employee advanced manufacturing firm with a production facility in rural Wisconsin. It works closely with local Wisconsin schools to expose young people to technical careers.

"We get all the highly skilled workers we need – but only because of our partnerships with local schools. We work closely with tech ed teachers. We browbeat superintendents and principals. We have them bring their entire K-12 faculty and staff to visit our plant and see what we do."



Jeffrey Geppert senior research leader, Battelle Memorial Institute



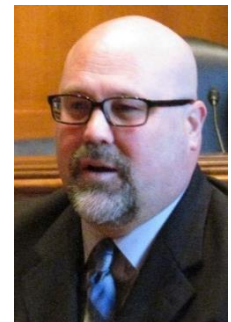
Battelle is a global research and development organization headquartered in Columbus, Ohio. It runs several national laboratories, provides research for government and business and has played a leading role in revitalizing career and STEM education in Ohio.

"Battelle does many things. We've started high and middle schools and recently a five-year tech school. We've worked with educators, industry representatives and state CTE superintendents to develop priorities for Ohio's vocational centers One of the key roles employers can play is to articulate the value of CTE: it's not academics or CTE, it's academics and CTE."

Jamie van Voorhis senior manager for workforce development, Jacobs Engineering

Jacobs is a global industrial construction and engineering firm. It sponsors an array of training programs in the U.S. and worldwide and recently received a WIOA grant to train construction workers for the Houston-Galveston region.

"We have a tremendous shortage in our industry - in our company, but also in the region. So we've taken the unusual step of collaborating with our competitors. We're using a WIOA grant to provide pre-hire training that leads to an industry-recognized credential. Some graduates of the program will come to work at Jacobs, others will be hired by other companies across the region."



To watch a video of the briefing, please [click here](#)

Opportunity America is a Washington-based nonprofit promoting economic mobility – work, skills, careers, ownership and entrepreneurship for poor and working Americans. The organization works to advance more equal opportunity by influencing policymakers at the state and federal levels and encouraging engagement by civil society, including employers.