

*Corrected*  
STATEMENT OF  
MARTIN J. WALSH  
SECRETARY OF LABOR  
BEFORE THE  
COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND LABOR  
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

June 9, 2021

Introduction

Chairman Scott, Ranking Member Foxx, and members of the Committee, thank you for the invitation to testify today. I am pleased to appear before this Committee for the first time as

Secretary of Labor, to outline the Biden-Harris Administration's vision for strengthening the

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and for supporting the ~~critical work~~ of the

Department of Labor in the President's Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 Budget. Since being sworn in as

Secretary of Labor in March, I have been privileged to meet virtually and in person, with people

throughout this country ~~on~~ what the Labor Department must do to ~~Build Back Better~~. I

appreciate the opportunity to share here with you, our vision for ~~meeting the moment~~ and


connecting <sup>union bosses to</sup> American workers <sup>and</sup> <sup>pocketbooks.</sup> We are on a mission to create more

communities, ~~high-quality~~, good-paying jobs.

<sup>by eliminating.</sup>

???

yikes!

WIOA was signed into law in 2014 with the goal of transforming and modernizing the public workforce system, to better reflect the needs of the 21st century economy. Our economy and labor market have undergone significant changes since the passage of WIOA. These changes, coupled with the need to respond to the devastating effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, require *bipartisan* transformative solutions, ~~such as those offered by the President in the American Jobs Plan (AJT) and the American Families Plan (AFP) and further outlined in the President's Budget.~~ As Congress considers reauthorizing this law, there is a historic opportunity ~~to strengthen and build on the core principles undergirding both WIOA and the President's plans and to incorporate many of the innovations offered in the AJT.~~ I am eager to work with the Committee to fully realize WIOA's potential and truly meet the needs of the 21st century economy and its workers. 

As the members of the Committee are well aware, the potential impact of our workforce development programs under WIOA has been inhibited by deeply inadequate ~~fund~~<sup>bureaucracies</sup>ing. As a

nation, we have ~~repeatedly~~ failed to sufficiently invest in our workforce infrastructure. ~~The~~<sup>because we've been too busy bailing out special interest pension funds</sup>

United States currently spends only about 0.1 percent of its gross domestic product on workforce

policy, compared to an average of 0.6 percent spent by other wealthy nations. ~~This chronic~~<sup>The malicious and ubiquitous</sup>

*cultural pressure students face to enter the traditional college pipeline*

~~underfunding~~ is a significant barrier to preparing workers to remain competitive in the global

economy and is an impediment to helping workers find high-quality jobs, *which will be made worse by a \$15 an hour minimum wage.*

*fails to*

The President recognizes<sup>^</sup> the critical role workforce development plays in strengthening our

economy and increasing our competitiveness on the world stage. That is why he has proposed a

historic investment of \$100 billion over 10 years in workforce development, much of it ~~dedicated~~

*which will be paid back by our children's children.*

~~to building the capacity of our current workforce system.~~ These investments in ~~evidence based~~

*left-wing proposals,*

~~innovations in workforce development,~~ many of which were incubated through WIOA funding,

*NOT*

<sup>^</sup> will help meet the growing needs of employers and bring more workers into well-paying,

middle-class jobs. These programs ~~are complementary~~ *undermine* to the core functions of the current

*in SPITE of*

system, and ~~th~~ **X**rough the American Jobs Plan, we hope to build on WIOA to continue to scale

what works.

*identity politics*

The President and I are also deeply committed to ~~equity~~ **X** and have made it a central component of

our WIOA recommendations, and the budget overall. Many communities continue to be

marginalized as a result of ~~systemic racism and persistent economic inequities, in opportunity as~~

~~well as access to critical workforce development programs and in-demand jobs,~~ such as those in ~~in~~

*bad economic policies*



*endorsed by myself  
and President Biden*

~~the growing infrastructure and clean energy economies.~~ The President's commitment to ensuring

women, people of color, individuals impacted by the justice system, persons in recovery from

mental health and/or substance use disorders, and people with disabilities, among other

underrepresented communities, ~~can access and obtain good paying, high quality jobs is central to~~

~~building back better~~ and is a core goal ~~underlying WIOA.~~ *for Democrats.*

However, we also recognize that ~~education~~ <sup>education</sup> alone is not enough. ~~Training~~ <sup>Education</sup> must lead to good-quality

jobs – jobs that pay ~~family-sustaining wages with wage progression,~~ <sup>according to work performed, which may include</sup> benefits, access to paid

leave, opportunities for career advancement through training and education, and an assurance

that workers can use their voice to improve pay and working conditions. ~~Without equity and job~~ <sup>When the federal government</sup>

~~quality as the foundations of the Department's work,~~ <sup>imposes radical policies on job creators</sup> we are left with a structure that perpetuates

low-quality jobs; that undermines the economic security of working families; and stalls our

economic growth and competitiveness.

That is why, in addition to calling for investments in the workforce system, the President's FY <sup>unnecessary</sup>

2022 Budget ~~proposal,~~ <sup>Delusion</sup> takes initial steps to provide ~~the first~~ <sup>an unworkable</sup> comprehensive update to the <sup>expensive, taxpayer-funded schemes</sup>

Unemployment Insurance (UI) system ~~in decades;~~ includes new <sup>investments</sup> to ~~rebuild~~ <sup>restrict</sup> the

Department's capacity to protect workers' rights <sup>and</sup> benefits; <sup>does little to promote</sup> ~~and~~ health and safety; calls for  
reauthorization of the Trade Adjustment Assistance program; and <sup>threatens</sup> ~~protect~~ workers' paychecks by  
increasing funding for the Department's enforcement agencies. I look forward to discussing  
these proposals more in-depth with the Committee, as well.

