

Good Morning Madame Secretary. Welcome back to the Subcommittee.

This morning the Subcommittee will hear testimony regarding the Department of Labor's budget request for fiscal year 2013. Secretary Solis, while you may be the last of the Cabinet Secretaries to appear before this Subcommittee, you are certainly not the least, as they say.

The programs under your jurisdiction are crucial to what is on the minds of millions of Americans today...and that is jobs. The Department of Labor is uniquely positioned to help this economy continue its slow rebound. But, given the fiscal realities we are now facing, we're going to have to find ways to do more with less. What a world we live in where the national debt and annual budget deficits have become matters of national security!

The unemployment rate has held at a stubbornly high 8.3%, with 12.8 million Americans still out of work. The reality is that we could very well eclipse 9% again as the long-term unemployed, encouraged by the prospects of finding work, re-enter the job market. So, we're far from calling this a true recovery. We must find a way to make Federal job training programs more productive. The Bureau of Labor Statistics has said that the job openings rate has "trended upward since the end of the recession in June 2009". This is a three-year upward trend and we still can't break 8%? With 3.5 million job openings currently available, we must find a way to better connect job seekers with these job openings.

It seems to me, though, that in recent years the Department has been operating in a vacuum as it seeks to revamp these

training programs. Many stakeholders, myself included, opposed the Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF) when it was first proposed. Many state agencies have voiced their opposition to reducing the Governors' Reserve as an offset to this new fund. And, yet this budget proposes \$100 million more for the WIF. The newly announced American Jobs Center...we've done this before, in the late '90's and it was abandoned after just two years. There must be some level of outreach and consultation with those who actually implement these programs. Without their support and buy-in on these costly proposals, the workforce delivery system will continue to produce marginal success rates.

I further believe it is the Department's role to create an environment that fosters job creation and economic growth. We need to help these businesses hire. Not regulate them into submission with an agenda of some 60-plus proposed regulations. We must hold bad actors accountable, there is no question. But, with this election year budget again doubling down on overly aggressive enforcement activities, it does little more than promote an adversarial relationship between employers and the Federal government. We can't and we must not over regulate.

I will ask some questions along these lines in a moment, but at this time I would like to yield to my Ranking Member, Rosa DeLauro, for an opening statement.