

L. Rural Education, Work Force and Job Training

Moderator: Representative Mary Gonzalez, Texas

- a. Rural Education Efforts, *Representative Terry Goodin, Indiana*
 - b. Rural Workforce and Immigration, *Senator Janne Myrdal, North Dakota*
 - c. Hawaii Efforts at Rural Education, *Senator Mike Gabbard, Hawaii*
 - d. Rural Education - Training to be an Urban Teacher, *Senator Jerry Sonnenberg, Colorado*
 - e. Ohio Efforts at Rural Education, *Representative John Patterson, Ohio*
- Sen. Jerry Sonnenberg, CO, discussed the school districts in his district and the differences in teacher pay across the state.
 - In one urban district (Cherry Creek) the salary range is \$40K to 92K and the medium size schools have ranges of \$29K to 63K. This leads to rural schools training urban teachers.
 - Can look at consolidating schools, but in rural areas, students may already be riding an hour or more one way.
 - The state has also looked at using marijuana money for education. The money is for capital costs for schools and requires matching funds.
 - Other approaches that rural school districts have looked at – providing housing to teachers; grow your own teacher when you hire a teacher in last year of school and pay them as student teachers; incentives for loan forgiveness; paying for education if they come back and teach. Also, it can be difficult for military spouses to teach after moving, so they waived the three-year rule to fill some education gaps.
 - Rep. John Patterson, OH, discussed education funding and work on a bipartisan plan (See handout.)
 - There are two components of school funding – base costs and distribution. Using analyses they have been able to ascertain the base cost per student including several components.
 - HB 305, Fair School Funding Plan - there are difficulties with answering “How much does my district get?” The plan is innovative as a blend of property and income to determine what the local share of funding will be. It also uses of sliding scale of 2 – 2.5% to figure out how much the local district should be able to raise.
 - Sen. Mike Gabbard, HI – discussed a youth leadership training program (Maho)
 - He shared some background on Hawaii. Hawaii imports 90% of its food. The average age of a farmer in HI is 60.1 years old.
 - In 2001, the farm (Maho) started with 5 acres. Now, it has expanded to 24 acres with a youth leadership training program for at risk youth. This also includes a farm to college career program with a \$500 /month stipend and full college tuition paid for. 73% of the funding comes from the government and grants. 27% funding comes from the farming operations. They hope to expand to 281 acres by 2027.
 - Legislation was introduced but did not pass; to fund a Center for Sustainable Community Food Systems.
 - Suggested – look at existing farms in your community, draw upon the culture, and build a youth leadership program.
 - farm in your community, draw upon culture and build a youth leadership program

- Rep. Terry Goodwin, IN –
 - Indiana General Assembly has decided to fund education based on number of students, which makes it hard on the smaller, rural schools.
 - Looking at the structure and years in the education system, decided the need to put together a program with an end in sight. Students decide on a college or vocational track.
 - For the early college initiative – Schools partner with community college. Students graduate high school with an associate degree. State legislation passed so that transferring students from the community college cannot be denied admission to the state public institutions of higher education. Students take the rigorous courses and the support of living at home. Students are often first-generation college students and the program can give them more self-confidence. Students also build self-esteem through opportunities to tutor younger students.
 - For the vocational program – schools partner with a workforce center. Students leave high school with training (i.e., international certification in welding). It doesn't cost the high school. There are also estimates that there is an income advantage.

- Sen. Janne Myrdal, ND, discussed rural workforce and immigration. She asked attendees not to be thinking about immigration in the political sense it is usually discussed today.
 - Need merit-based immigration – but the country has made it so political. There is a growing number of immigrants from southern Africa and eastern Europe. They need to get merit-based immigration.
 - Seasonal guest worker program works in North Dakota. There are also families that do not want to be guest workers anymore and want a path to become citizens.
 - She asked – What can we learn from our Canadian neighbors?
 - There has to be a way have an immigration program beyond the politically partisan discussion.

- Open Discussion and Q&A
 - Western Equipment Dealers Association mentioned the shortage of diesel mechanics and the association's work to get kids at the high school level involved.
 - In the program in Rep. Goodin's district, schools need to allow students to choose a pathway they want to take and then partner with a vocational school.
 - Discussion on immigration and drivers permits. The feds don't like states providing drivers permits. H2A visas are also very slow.
 - Rep. Gonzalez closed by asking - What will rural communities look like 20 years from now? Passionate about rural communities because what it means for taking care of each other.