



U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES COMMITTEE ON
SCIENCE, SPACE, & TECHNOLOGY

Opening Statement

Chairwoman Haley Stevens (D-MI)
of the Subcommittee on Research and Technology

Research and Technology Subcommittee Hearing:
Strengthening the U.S. Microelectronics Workforce

Tuesday, February 15, 2022

Good morning and welcome to this important hearing on strengthening the U.S. Microelectronics Workforce. And a warm welcome to our distinguished panel of witnesses.

Today's hearing will pick up where we left off in December's full committee hearing on American microelectronics manufacturing. Today we are focusing on the challenge of building up a microelectronics workforce to fill the new fabs and R&D facilities that will be supported under the CHIPS for America Act. Investing in the semiconductor workforce is essential to our country's success as we re-shore American manufacturing and maintain the American lead in technological innovations.

If you know me, you know that manufacturing is near and dear to my heart. Since coming to Congress, I have sought to understand manufacturing challenges through weekly Manufacturing Monday visits, and I have sponsored legislation to strengthen American manufacturing through Manufacturing USA and the Manufacturing Extension Partnership Program. Last year, I launched the House Democratic Manufacturing Working Group.

Manufacturing is the lifeblood of the American economy. The CHIPS for America Act, enacted in 2020, will help revitalize American semiconductor manufacturing through a whole-of-government approach. It authorizes the Department of Commerce to create several key programs to grow domestic capacity in microelectronics. Funding for these programs is included in the America COMPETES Act, which passed the House of Representatives earlier this month. When implemented, these programs are estimated to create more than 40,000 new semiconductor jobs, making today's hearing very timely. The CHIPS Act did address workforce as a key component of the authorized programs. But today's hearing is not bounded by what's in the CHIPS Act. We are taking a higher-level look at challenges and opportunities to build and expand the semiconductor workforce.

Semiconductor manufacturing jobs are good, high-paying careers. The semiconductor industry hires from a wide range of educational backgrounds, with about half of the current workforce

holding an associate's degree or less. Semiconductor employees across all education levels make about 65% more than their peers in other sectors. These are also steady and safe careers with ample room for growth and widely transferable skills. Yet, we've heard from industry and educators alike about how students, veterans, and displaced workers just aren't aware of semiconductor careers and so don't pursue the training needed to enter this field. I'm wondering, and I hope we hear today, how Congress can help raise awareness and inspire more workers to enter this field.

Awareness is not the only hurdle. There are currently not enough programs, across all educational levels, to meet current workforce needs. Today we will also explore how to build and sustain more education and training programs.

We have an incredible, seasoned panel here today who have worked through many of the issues firsthand. Collectively they have created community college and hands-on capstone certificates, apprenticeship, and Veteran training programs, developed K-12 outreach, and led cutting-edge research programs. Each of these components will be necessary to build the American semiconductor workforce of our future.

Thank you to our witnesses for being here today, and doing the great work you do, I'm looking forward to your insightful testimony.