Senator Jim DeMint

The Job *Is* The Training
Testimony before the Joint Economic Committee
Hearing on "Manufacturing in the USA: Training America's Workforce"
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"Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Vice Chairman, for the invitation to testify today.

The training and skills of America's workforce are growing more important every day, as our economy relies more and more on technological innovation and individual productivity. But as we know, the new technologies that drive economic growth and opportunity also present challenges.

The challenge of keeping pace with improving technology and innovation has been constant throughout history. But we must always remember that innovation is still *a good thing*. Our embrace of it is a primary reason for America's centuries-long economic resilience and prosperity. Every economy periodically stumbles, but nations that embrace innovation recover more quickly, and get back to work.

I will leave to the experts fuller discussion about particular government job training programs. Instead, I will focus my testimony on this simple lesson that I learned in the private sector: the only sure-fire training and skills-development program I know of is actually having *a job.*

And it is in this area – job creation – that Washington has utterly failed, in manufacturing and every other industry in our economy. Businesses small and large have every incentive in the world to train their employees, develop their skills, and keep them current on the latest technologies.

Unfortunately, current economic policies give those same businesses every *disincentive* in the world to actually create new jobs and hire new employees.

Washington's addiction to spending has led small business owners and would-be entrepreneurs – the people who create two-thirds of all new jobs – to conclude that higher taxes are on the way. They're not paranoid: the president has been adamant about the need for higher taxes as part of any deficit reduction package.

As last Friday's jobs reports revealed, there are only so many people and businesses left doing well enough to create new jobs in this economy. Yet these are the very people being targeted for tax hikes.

Meanwhile, we have free trade agreements with loyal allies waiting for ratification, agreements that will open new foreign markets for American products and create American jobs. Yet these agreements – with Colombia, South Korea, and Panama – remain on a shelf because the president doubts the competitiveness of American workers.

Look at our $1.7 trillion regulatory state. According to the Small Business Administration, federal regulations add an average of $8,000 to the cost of every employee.

On taxes, spending, trade, and regulation, every signal from federal policymakers to job-creating businesses and entrepreneurs is that success will be punished.

There is no better illustration of the misguided ideas driving federal policy today than the action taken by the National Labor Relations Board against The Boeing Company.

Two years ago, Boeing decided to build a new airplane factory in North Charleston, South Carolina. They have invested $1 billion in the plant, creating more than 1,000 jobs, all of them directly or indirectly serving the manufacturing industry we are all here to discuss.

Yet the NLRB, led by President Obama's own recess-appointed Acting General Counsel, filed suit against Boeing to shut down the new factory, simply because they do not like South Carolina's right-to-work law.

And people wonder where all the jobs are?

Policymakers looking for someone to blame for America's high rates of unemployment, underemployment, and long-term unemployment, need only find the nearest mirror.

And it cannot be forgotten that those who bear the greatest burden of these policies are those who can least afford to – those Americans who grew up in dysfunctional communities, trapped in failing government schools and a cycle of government dependency. Those with the fewest skills are the first to lose their jobs, and the last to find work again.

These struggling Americans have not been left behind by the free market – they have been knee-capped by well-intentioned but catastrophic government policies.

Jobs, growth, investment, innovation, and opportunity are what really train America's workers and develop their skills. And they are inevitable byproducts of a free economy.

They are readily available to us, if only we reform the policies Washington has slapped on our economy like hand-cuffs in the last several decades… and especially in the last few years.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman."