

OPENING STATEMENT AS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY



Opening Statement of Chairman Steve Chabot Committee on Small Business Hearing: Help Wanted: Small Business Providing Opportunities for All AS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY May 19, 2016

Good morning. I call this Committee hearing to order.

Often when this committee meets, it is to discuss the challenges facing small businesses. Today, however, we get to talk about some of the truly inspiring opportunities they can offer. After all, small businesses are not just the backbone of the American economy, but they are also at the heart of our communities. And so today, the Committee will hear about the role small businesses are playing in expanding employment opportunities for all Americans.

I am proud to welcome our four witnesses today, who have had such a positive effect on their, and our, communities. I am especially pleased that one of our witnesses, Ms. Terri Hogan, is visiting us today from my hometown of Cincinnati.

For adults with intellectual or developmental disabilities or disorders, finding sustaining employment can be a real challenge. These individuals can be overlooked when employment opportunities arise, and too often they are shut out from the workplace all together. Yet across the country we are seeing examples of how small businesses, with their ability to adapt and accommodate, are able to provide employment opportunities to those who might not otherwise get a chance. Today, we are excited to hear about some of these stories, and learn more about the ways individuals who may have special needs are contributing to a small business's success.

As we approach the end of May, graduation season is officially upon us. Thousands of young adults will be leaving school, ready and eager to join the workforce. This new chapter in life can present challenges for everyone, but for those with intellectual or developmental disorders or disabilities, this is especially daunting. These men and women leaving school might face a future where the prospect of finding employment is unknown, and options for the future are limited. Thankfully, small businesses working to expand opportunities are allowing individuals with special needs to enter the workforce, and grow their quality of life.

I am looking forward to hearing from our witnesses today, and applaud them for the example they have set in showing the tremendous impact expanding employment opportunities can have. I will now yield to Ranking Member Velázquez for her opening remarks.