

U.S. Rep. Grothman: More Apprenticeships

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(Washington, D.C.) – Today, at a [House Education and Labor Committee](#) hearing, Congressman Glenn Grothman (R-Glenbeulah) questioned witnesses about the state of apprenticeship programs in America and how Wisconsin has excelled in this area of study.

Dr. Morna Foy, President of the Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS) was among those testifying at the hearing. Dr. Foy described Wisconsin's stellar apprenticeship programs as some of the best in the country and explained how they became so robust.

Key Takeaway 1: Apprenticeships provide students with hands-on experience that is essential when entering the skilled labor market.

Key Takeaway 2: Congressman Grothman and Dr. Foy agree that apprenticeship programs should be expanded.

Key Takeaway 3: Wisconsin is a leader in apprenticeship programs and other states should look to the Badger state as a template for success.

[Click here for a full list of witnesses](#)

Grothman's introduction of Dr. Foy

Congressman Grothman: It's my honor to introduce Dr. Morna Foy, president of the Wisconsin Technical College System, one of the best in the country. We have 16 public two-year institutions serving more than 300,000 students enrolled in degree,

diploma and transfer programs, dual credit courses with high schools, basic adult education and customized training and partnerships with employers. Technical colleges, 5 of which I have in my district, are the primary provider of classroom instruction for Wisconsin's registered instruction program, the first in the nation which was created in 1911, the same year as the state's technical college system. Dr. Foy has been engaged in higher education policy and leadership for 30 years and believes strongly in the value of apprenticeship programs, which is why we have her here today. We are very pleased to have her here to highlight Wisconsin's program and how we can improve apprentices at the federal level. Dr. Foy has an undergraduate degree from the University of Wisconsin, a master's degree from Indiana and a doctorate at our joint alma mater, the University of Wisconsin. Thank you for being here Doctor Foy.

[Click here to watch Congressman Grothman's introduction.](#)

Excerpts of Grothman's questioning

Congressman Glenn Grothman: "Dr. Foy, first of all, thank you again for being here. We have, I think, the top of the line in the country but could you talk a little bit more about Wisconsin's system and why you feel it kind of stand out among other states?"

Dr. Morna Foy: *"I'd be happy to do that. I think there's a few things. Wisconsin's pretty fortunate because we've had a long history of connecting apprenticeship with academic programs. But that's one of the things that is different in Wisconsin, is that that relationship between the Department of Workforce Development and the technical college systems is codified in statute. We know how to work together and we do that very well. We also have a technical college system that our curriculum is developed, whether it's for apprenticeship programs or academic programs, on a competency basis. That means that we build learning modules and we put all our curriculum into a data base again whether it is for a programs or academic and what results in is that it makes it very easy for us to crosswalk between those two kinds of delivery models and therefore combine credentials for students. We also have very, very strong relationship with state employers, so that makes sure that our curriculum, again, whether it's for academic programs or for apprenticeship, is current, it is modified appropriately as industry changes. We have one other component that I know is quite unique in the country that we have paid related instruction. That's really important, I think, for reaching those populations that maybe haven't been as a big a participants in apprenticeships and also incumbent*

workers who want to advance their skills because without paid related instruction, they have to take essentially a pay cut in order to get the classroom instruction, and that makes a big difference. It makes it much more attractive for employees and, frankly, it is never something that we hear a concern raised by employers. They're happy to pay it because they see the value."

Congressman Glenn Grothman: "Ok when we talk about cooperation with the university system, is Wisconsin somewhat unique in the ability to have tech school credits go to the university and university credits go to the tech school?"

Dr. Morna Foy: *"I think that we made a lot of good progress in that area, particularly in apprenticeship I think we are quite unique. I think we also have some other states around the country that we are using as models for us in terms of what is possible. Program to program articulation is not something that has happened that much in Wisconsin in the past, but it is definitely our focus now. I think for programs like apprenticeship, it's going to make a big difference in terms of that next step articulation from apprenticeship to short term certificate to associate degree and to bachelor's."*

Congressman Glenn Grothman: "Recently, I ran into somebody who knew somebody who graduated from Moraine Park, I think they went to the Beaver Dam campus, and we were told, they are going to be working on the electrical lines very challenging job, but they're making six figures. One of the things that I have a problem with is so many people, including a lot of politicians, talk about a four-year degree being a panacea and the height of achievement in society, and I always bristle when I hear politicians say that. What can we do to get politicians, and other people in society, to stop always pushing the four-year degree?"

Dr. Morna Foy: *"I personally think that the career pathway model is the solution to a lot of different academic providers as well as industry employer recruiters. Because pathway model recognizes the fact that a high school diploma is not going to get you very far in your career in the next 20, 30, 40 years. Everybody needs to be continually learning. Industry is changing too fast for us to stop at any credential and that goes true for a bachelor's as well. So, our job as educators is to make sure that you can continually access increased skillsets and increased credentials. Employers are interested in matching their job opportunities with those kinds of credentials, paying people at the right amount for the right skill set and then creating a pathway to advancement. When you talk about it in terms of pathways, it's not so much us against them, representative, it's more about what role and*

what part do we all play in that path.”

Congressman Glenn Grothman: “I was at an Eagle Scout ceremony on Sunday. And I asked the guy what he was going to do and, he was obviously a sharp guy and he was going into the trades. I thought it was really good that we made progress, that this obviously top-of-the-line guy telling me that he was going to become an electrician. I thought man you made the right decision. I think we’re are making progress.”

[Click here to view Grothman’s remarks.](#)