

## Testimony before the House Committee on Technology, Economic Development, and Workforce

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Good morning, Chairman Strama and members of the Committee. I am Brooke Dollens Terry, an education policy analyst with the Texas Public Policy Foundation.

The Texas Public Policy Foundation is a non-profit, free-market research organization guided by the principles of limited government, free markets, individual liberty, personal responsibility and private property rights.

We strongly believe that in order for Texas to continue leading the nation in job creation, the state must stay focused on:

- Keeping taxes low;
- Keeping spending low;
- Having reasonable regulations; and
- Having good schools that graduate students ready for college or the workforce.

Renowned economist Art Laffer recently did a study for us comparing Texas and California and found that economic policies such as high taxes, excessive spending, and regulation are driving people to flee California and move to Texas. Businesses want to locate and people want to live where government doesn't get in their way with excessive taxes and regulation.

In regard to the specific jurisdiction of this committee, I want to address career and technology education, formerly called vocational education. Last session, the Texas Legislative passed HB 3485 which rewrites the career and technology curriculum to make sure it is updated with the current needs of business and industry. This process is underway and making good progress.

Texas needs to continue to improve the quality, rigor, and relevance of CTE courses to

help students graduate ready for the jobs of today and tomorrow.

To that end we propose:

- Encourage CTE teachers and employers to work together so students have access to internships, job shadowing, mentoring or field trip opportunities.
- Provide and encourage training and professional development opportunities to help CTE teachers to stay current with new and emerging technology and the latest industry standards.
- Recruit current and former industry professionals to teach with a streamlined certification process or guest lecture opportunities.
- Encourage career guidance counselors and teachers to become more aware of labor market trends and jobs in high-growth industries through collaboration with their local workforce development boards and share that information with their students.
- Improve articulation of CTE coursework to two-year and four-year universities and make those articulation agreements transparent to students.
- Make sure CTE courses are allowed as an option under the four-by-four if they are rigorous as determined by leading to college credit, industry certification, or state licensure.

Now Talmadge Heflin, the Director of our Center for Fiscal Policy will address unemployment insurance issues. Thank you for the opportunity to testify. 