



**MEETING OF THE
TEXAS WORKFORCE COMMISSION**

DATE

MARCH 30, 2021

1 TUESDAY, MARCH 30, 2021

2 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: All right, good morning,
3 everyone. This meeting is called to order. Mr. Trobman, has
4 anyone signed up for public comment?

5 MR. TROBMAN: Good morning, commissioners.
6 Les Trobman, general counsel. We do have one public commenter
7 this morning, Gloria Casas [SP]. Ms. Casas, if you could unmute
8 yourself and state your name for the record, and go ahead and
9 proceed.

10 MS. CASAS: My name is Gloria Casas, and I'm
11 from the Rio Grande Valley.

12 MR. TROBMAN: Ms. Casas?

13 MS. CASAS: Yes.

14 MR. TROBMAN: We may have a volume issue. If
15 you could just hold on one second. Okay. Go ahead and proceed.

16 MS. CSSAS: Okay. My name is Gloria Casas,
17 and I'm from the Rio Grande Valley. Can you hear me now?

18 MR. TROBMAN: Yes, ma'am, we can. Go ahead
19 and please provide your comments.

20 MS. CASAS: Okay. Well, first of all I wanna
21 thank you for this opportunity to visit with you. Just two
22 minutes, just to let you know who I am. I'm a 73-year-old woman
23 who has been away from formal employment for five years. I
24 worked many, many years. However, now that I'm away from formal
25 employment, I find myself working 12 to 15 hours a day, helping

1 my son run three businesses. And the only reason that I'm doing
2 it is because we cannot find a person that could basically
3 replace me. I do his HR and I do his general management. Right
4 now he's functioning at 75 percent employment. He has a capacity
5 to hire and provide employment for 50 persons, but yet, you
6 know, we--he cannot find people to work. And so this presents a
7 big problem for a person in his position. He's trying to service
8 people--I mean, provide--it's a service industry, it's three
9 restaurants. One, I mean, a big restaurant, and two local ones.
10 One in a rural community and the other one in a medium-sized--La
11 Feria, San Benito, and [sounds like] Harrington. And it's been
12 very distressing to me, because I served in many courts. In
13 fact, I worked with Workforce Solutions a while back. And so,
14 you know, I know Pat Hobbs and Henry Castillo, our local
15 contractor for Workforce Solutions, and I've had conversations
16 with them and their staff. And they tell me, and I believe them,
17 and I know it's a fact, that we have this federal money that
18 comes down to assist our workforce, right now mainly with
19 unemployment. And my heart just dropped when I heard that the
20 unemployment was going to be available through September. And
21 although my heart goes out to all these families are in need of
22 these resources, my heart goes out to businesses like my son
23 that will now have less workforce to address his needs. And you
24 know that in a service industry, when you have a reduced
25 workforce, it impacts the type of service that you provide.

1 Customers wanna be provided good, personal service. Employees
2 work their heart out and have personal needs, where they need to
3 be gone for a day or two or what have you, or god forbid, an
4 illness. But when they have those needs, guess what happens to
5 our workforce? You know, he has no one to pull to fill in that
6 particular day that that employee's going to be out. So, that
7 brings a lot of stress for the employees. And so my reasons for
8 coming to you is for--who is--can reach out to the legislators
9 to let them know that yes, thank you very much for everything
10 you're providing; however, these are our needs. You know, I have
11 been a school trustee for 26 years, and that's at the state, you
12 know, local--well, local, state, and national level. And
13 whenever there's an issue with the people that I represent,
14 which are the students and the community and the school
15 district, I reach out to my legislators and let them know, you
16 know, what we're dealing with from a personal level. So, my
17 question to you is who is reaching out to the federal--at the
18 federal level, state level, you know, to people in charge of
19 developing these programs and providing services, to let them
20 know what we really need? You know, why does a small business--
21 where is the benefit for the small business that's providing the
22 taxes to fund these programs that they have? We're very blessed
23 in the valley that we have a personal connection with the TWC,
24 Mr. [inaudible] my name just escapes me right now. [Inaudible]
25 And, you know, so I'm very proud that he is representing us. But

1 nonetheless, he's just one member, and so my question, again, is
2 who is telling the story of what we're going through here in the
3 valley? When I worked with Workforce Solutions, I was in charge
4 of developing what was--what is now the Lower Rio Grande
5 Development Council. What was called the Small City Coalition.
6 And the purpose of that coalition was to provide a voice for the
7 rural communities. And so, you know, I worked very hard to get
8 the coalition going, and as I said, it's now part of the Lower
9 Rio Grande Development Council. But it protected the rural
10 communities. When we had this freeze, I just about--my heart
11 just stopped. Because Sysco, one of our big providers of
12 supplies, decided they were not going to deliver to La Feria,
13 because we were a small community. Well, guess what? We couldn't
14 open the restaurant, even though we had [inaudible] and what
15 have you. We couldn't open it because we did not have supplies.
16 And we had to let--seven of the workers were not able to work.
17 And I contacted Sysco and I said, "What were you thinking?" I
18 mean, local funds impact our school district. And they were
19 like, "Well, you know, we didn't--" they also had the same
20 problem. "We didn't have enough drivers." So, you know, small
21 communities get impacted daily. So, I'm reaching out to the
22 Lower Rio Grande Development Council. I said, you know, I helped
23 develop that coalition, so what are you doing to provide support
24 for the small cities, for the rural communities, actually. So,
25 you know, I've been involved in different levels. I sit on the

1 appraisal district to make sure that school districts get our
2 proper funding. You know, I sit on the Valley [inaudible]
3 Council because of the health needs that we have here on in the
4 valley. I try my best, and I tell my son, you know, had it not
5 been for the [inaudible] meetings capacity that we have now, I
6 couldn't leave the valley to attend those meetings anymore.
7 Because I work--and I kid you not--I work between 12 to 15
8 hours, helping my son. And I'm 73. I've been away for five
9 years. I mean, you know, when is it gonna stop? So, this is the
10 reason, and I will go ahead and let you get back to your
11 business of providing services for us. But I do want you to know
12 that small business are dying here in the valley. They're
13 closing up, due a lot of times because of the lack of workforce.
14 And you know, I mean, what's gonna happen? I don't know the
15 percentage now, but I used to know it, the percent of small
16 businesses' contribution to the tax base. So, you know, what's
17 gonna happen? So, again, I thank you very much for your time,
18 and I will be following you, you know, more. I reached out to
19 state represent--I mean [inaudible] you know, our legislator,
20 you know, to--so, what are you doing? We're dying because of
21 lack of workforce. So, thank you so much, and you all have a
22 beautiful day and a great meeting. Thank you.

23 MR. TROBMAN: Thank you, Ms. Casas. And I
24 think that's all we have for public comment this morning.

25

1 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: All right, thank you very
2 much. Good morning, Ms. Miller.

3 MS. MILLER: Good morning, sir.

4 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: How are you today?

5 MS. MILLER: I'm very well, thank you.

6 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Good. Are we--do we have
7 an exciting group of cases to look at this morning?

8 MS. MILLER: Yes, sir.

9 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Thank you. Is there any
10 other order of business to come before the commission? Hearing
11 none, is there a motion--

12 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: I'm sorry, Chairman,
13 I apologize. I was delayed on that. Chairman and Commissioner
14 Demerson, I would like to request that Mr. Serna and the team--
15 and for the team, the following. At the December 1, 2020
16 commission meeting, the commissioners approved the childcare
17 industry partners program, which was modeled off OEI's Texas
18 industry partnership, TIP, program. TCIP allows for a cash match
19 from industry foundations. I would like to ask staff to
20 investigate expanding the definition of partnership to include
21 all philanthropic foundations, not just industry foundations, so
22 long as they are in good standing with the agency and IRS.
23 Understanding that childcare is unlike any other industries, it
24 does not make sense to have it exactly mimic OEI's TIP. We may
25 have missing opportunity to leverage dollars from foundations

1 such as Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation or other similar
2 foundations. Thank you, Chairman.

3 MR. SERNA: Not used to standing on this
4 side. [inaudible] Sorry for the delay. Commissioner Alvarez,
5 we'll certainly work on that. If you don't mind, if I can get
6 staff to visit with your staff to kind of fully understand the
7 extent of what it is you want us to explore, we'd be glad to do
8 that.

9 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Thank you, Ed.

10 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Any other item of
11 business?

12 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: I think--let me just
13 add, while they're looking at that, if we find that it's
14 beneficial to extend those areas of opportunity for the
15 childcare program, let's revisit the TIP program as well, to see
16 if we're missing any opportunities on that side as well. We may
17 not be, but let's look into that.

18 MR. SERNA: Yes, sir. We'll do both.

19 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Is there a motion to
20 adjourn?

21 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Chairman, I move that
22 we adjourn.

23 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Second.

24 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: It's been moved and
25 seconded that we adjourn, and we're adjourned.