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FALK AUDITORIUM

YOUTH PERSPECTIVES ON THE FUTURE OF APPRENTICESHIPS

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UNCORRECTED TRANSCRIPT

WELCOMING REMARKS:

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EVENT FRAMING REMARKS:

MOLLY BASHAY
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RESEARCH FRAMING REMARKS:

ANNELIES GOGER, Fellow, Brookings Metro

FIRESIDE CHAT:

THE HONORABLE JOHN HICKENLOOPER, (D-Colo.), U.S. Senate

MODERATOR: FRANKIE MANSARAY, Apprentice Class '23, Business Operations

PANEL:

LATEEFAH DURANT, Vice President of Innovation, CityWorks DC

FRANKIE MANSARAY, Apprentice Class '23, Business Operations

LEAH SLOAN, Apprentice Class '24, Finance

MODERATOR: JUBEI BROWN-WEAVER Apprentice Class '24, Information Technology

PUENTES: Okay. Hello, everybody. Happy Apprenticeship Week. All right. My name is Robert Puentes. I am the director of Brookings Metro. And I welcome you all to this this great event here today. It's really my pleasure to have you here for the event, "Youth Perspectives on the Future of Apprenticeships." I think it's very clear to a lot of us that, you know, coming off the election that college degrees really did make a big difference in voting behavior. I think we saw that across the board with a strong sense, especially among some youth voters, that there are certain opportunities that are just not available to them. There was a feeling about that. This is understandable because youth in America today are not okay. Since the pandemic, we've seen a rise in mental illness. We've seen a rise in crime, we've seen general kind of disengagement. And we've also seen a loss of faith that going to college is a possible and worthwhile activity, even particularly particularly among young men. Indeed, rising housing costs and inflation make some opportunities for a lot of youth feel out of reach. For their part, employers are also facing a challenge that talent is more scarce due to baby boomers retiring, due to low immigration. Due to long term trends of declining labor force participation, employers are waking up to the reality that they have to play more of an active role in cultivating talent over the long term, working more closely with educators to fund and retain the talents that they need. Now, here in the hyperpartisan world of Washington, it's hard to find any kind of bipartisan solutions to things these days, but one of them is apprenticeships. It's widely considered to be the gold standard of workforce development. But here in the United States, it is severely underutilized. Internationally, youth apprenticeship is a powerful tool for reducing youth unemployment, for engaging talent that wants to learn by doing and for meeting the needs that employers have with both education as well as hands on experience. We're really excited to have Senator Hickenlooper is going to be joining us in just a little bit. Senator John Hickenlooper introduced bipartisan legislation to advance youth apprenticeship with Indiana Senator Mike Braun, who's now the governor elect of Indiana, and through his early support of CareerWise in Colorado, has been instrumental in making it possible for young people, the young people who are going to be speaking with us here today to have the opportunity to do an apprenticeship in high school. And I am really honored and excited that we're going to have the apprentices here up on this Brookings stage, sharing their advice and their experiences with us today. I just want to get a big thank you to City Works DC, who's a co-sponsor of this event to the fantastic Brookings team for pulling this together. Phoebe Copeland and the AV team for doing all the hard work. Finally, because it is National Apprenticeship Week, I will turn it over to Molly Bashay, who is from the Department of Labor. She's going to tell us more about what is happening around the country to advance apprenticeship. Molly, I'll turn it over to you. Thank you all very much for being here. We're looking forward to this conversation.

BASHAY: Thank you so much. Good afternoon, everyone. And again, thank you to Brookings for hosting this event and helping to kick off National Apprenticeship Week with a bang. I apologize I'm not able to be with you all in person, but I am so excited to be able to participate thanks to the success of their AV team. Thank you again, Brookings, for being able to work with me on that. My name is Molly Bashay. I am a director of Investing in America at the Department of Labor in our Employment and Training Administration. And I'm so pleased to be with you all to help kick off National Apprenticeship Week. This year, we're celebrating the 10th annual National Apprenticeship Week. Yes, ten whole years, a whole decade of celebrating the value of registered apprenticeship in developing the highly skilled workforce that meets not only industry needs, but creates pathways for youth and young adults, people who have been underserved or underutilized in the workforce, and making sure that we're giving opportunity to all people to catapult them into good quality jobs, advance racial and gender equity, and overall strengthen our economy. As you all know, I'm here. I'm speaking to a group of friends here, National Apprenticeship Week is again, a national celebration where employers, industry representatives, labor organizations, community-based organizations, workforce partners, educational institutions, really everyone in every sort of center of what the workforce is and can be, including at every level of government, comes together to host events and showcase the successes and value of registered apprenticeship for strengthening not only our economy, but again, that highly skilled workforce. Again, to celebrate the 10th year of National Apprenticeship Week, our theme this year is, of course, just celebrating that ten years of engagement, expansion and innovation. And this theme reflects the transformative power registered apprenticeships. I know you all understand and that we hope that we can have the space to talk a little bit about the exciting things already to come. And as you mentioned already, a lot of the ways in which we still need to grow and still need to make sure that we're allowing the impact of registered apprenticeship to feel, to be felt in all communities that maybe still need that opportunity. That said, I do want to highlight a couple of the successes of registered apprenticeships and some of the good things that we managed to do in the last decade. Just a couple of items. We've had nearly 23,000 new registered apprenticeship programs created by industry partners, which is a 31% increase from where we started, which is no joke and very significant, if I do say so myself. We've also had in that time 2.3 million new apprentices, which is an 80% increase and including significantly an increase in underrepresented populations such as women, people of color, young people, which again, I know is the topic of our conversation here and a very exciting one as well, including also individuals with disabilities and our veterans. Another item that I want to highlight is just the strong growth in [inaudible] of registered apprenticeship across all industries. I think we can all agree that the registered apprenticeship of 50 years ago is not the one that we are seeing today, and I know we'll get into that a little bit with our panel in our

fireside chat as well. Our registered apprenticeship is not just construction, it's manufacturing, it's cybersecurity, it's office administration, it's health care, it's everything in between. And it's still expanding into new and exciting and emerging industries to build the talent of tomorrow. So, I don't want to belabor the point, because I think we're all excited and eager to hear more from our panelists and again, our fireside chat, but I just want to close with, as we all know, National Apprenticeship Week offers just such a unique opportunity to spotlight not only the significant progress that we as the workforce system and partners are able to leverage, but the extreme opportunity for just cohesion and joint cooperation and that bipartisanship to move the needle forward for all people, for all communities, for all economies, and make sure that we're reflecting that commingled desire to have a positive effect on the young people and the adults who are taking an opportunity to step forward into their careers, step forward into their futures. And highlighting again that ten-year milestone is allowing us to elevate the nearly 10,000 events we're hosting nationwide, the 1.4 million event attendees and over 1800 proclamations made, all in the effort to advance and celebrate and talk about registered apprenticeship and bring that opportunity as far as we can across the nation. So with that, I will hand back and thank you again for having me.

Goger: Good afternoon, everybody. It's really a pleasure to be here. My name is Annelies Goger and I will say that as the first person in my family to go to college, I wish I had the opportunity to do a youth apprenticeship. And I think you're going to hear that in a few minutes, why I say that. But the thing is that I had to work on the side in restaurants, etc. and I that was sort of how I said, Well, you know, I don't want to stay here forever. I want to go go to college so that I can get into a real career. But what you're going to hear today directly from youth is how they got exposed to that much earlier. And I think that's something that we need to think more about. So as Molly just highlighted for us, apprenticeship has been growing. There is a growing field of, you know, it's apprenticeship going into new industries outside, just the trades put into office jobs and all kinds of other opportunities in tech, in health care. We're seeing also the periphery proliferation of a lot of pilots in different models, which is a good way to start. Right? You want to figure out, well, what works and then how do you build from there? But I will say the challenge for us right now is to figure out how we can start to move from a space of a lot of variation and lots of different words like pre apprenticeship, apprenticeship, registered apprenticeship. There's all kinds of words and I think it is confusing the landscape a bit. There's a lot of noise. So one of the things that I learned from the three states that I convened and one of my projects, Indiana, Colorado and Alabama, one of the things I learned was that we need some streamlining of definitions and we need to think about these opportunities not as a one off things like I did a pre apprenticeship or I did an internship, but actually I started here and I progressed into an apprenticeship.

So in the early stages it might be something like touch, like career exposure. But then as you get into the apprenticeship, it's actually a rigorous, high quality professional opportunity to get into a very good job. And I think that it's important for us to not have these different programs competing with each other for employer attention, etc. There really get to a place where one leads directly into the other and people have choices about whether they stay in the apprenticeship or decide to do a degree or do both. Because in countries like Switzerland, which we're going to hear a little bit more about, I think you can get a degree out of that. It's an applied university system where you spend time in the workplace, even up to the master's or Ph.D. level. So I want us to imagine that future where things like that are possible in the US. So a couple other things we learn and then I'll hand the mic over to our young people who will be leading the rest of the discussion today. One is there are still a lot of misconceptions about apprenticeship, so we learn from the different states that getting messaging right and intentionally getting messages right is important. We have a legacy of tracking, especially in the US with immigrant populations. Black and brown populations have been told either you choose the trades or you go to college. We should be intentional in our messaging that actually you can do both. And if we build institutions to make that easier, I think it will go much better. Second, we need more employer participation. As Rob mentioned, employers are hitting structural challenges where as baby boomers retire to actually find qualified talent used to be able to just post a role and people show up and they're ready. But now I think with a lot of the demographic shifts, that's going to be a lot harder. How can we make apprenticeship for small businesses something that they can do that it doesn't take nine months to get up and running? How do we make that process easier and get them more engaged in shaping the curricula in our schools? And then finally, what I call recognizing learning, which is a little wonky, but you're going to hear them talk about this pressure to go to college, right? If you do it in high school and then your parents are saying, but I want you to go to college. Right. So how do you recognize that time in the workplace has real valid learning and say, okay, you're doing this work in the field, that's something that you're bringing to your next job and you're going to look different from someone who only went to college. And that can be a distinguishing feature for people. How do we actually validate that? By giving it credit and making it a formal part of our education system like it is in many other countries? So I want to leave it there and I'm really proud to give an opportunity, give the stage over to. Our youth. Today we have Frankie Mansaray. They are you'll see in a minute on fire. And then we have a panel following the fireside with Senator Hickenlooper and Frankie. We'll have a panel with two other youth apprenticeships, Jubei Brown-Weaver, who will be moderating today, and Leah Sloan along with Frankie. And then I have my friend Lateefah Durant. It's great to see you today. She works at CityWorks, which is our co-sponsor today. CityWorks is also a career wise affiliate. So Senator Hickenlooper, when he first got involved in all of this in Colorado, he was very

instrumental in starting career wise. He he led a delegation to Switzerland to learn about their systems and was inspired by that to really start that in the US. And one of the spin offs of CareerWise, CareerWise, Colorado is CareerWise DC, which is through CityWork. So I just want to explain all that. Thank you for co-sponsoring and thank you, Rob, for your introduction. Now, without further ado, I want to introduce Frankie and Senator Hickenlooper.

MANSARAY: Enjoy the song. So, hi, everyone. Good morning. My name is Frankie Mansaray. I am 20 years old and a native Washingtonian. I'm currently attending The Catholic University of America, where I'm pursuing my Bachelors of Science in Business Administration. I am a proud youth apprentice alum, the CareerWise DC Youth Apprenticeship Program, their very first cohort. So I was the beginning. Okay. You know, I'm really excited to be your moderator of this fireside chat today. But something that I'm even more excited about is to introduce the star of this panel because he essentially reshaped my professional and academic journey. Everyone, please help me give a warm welcome to Senator Hickenlooper. Senator Hickenlooper, how does it feel to be the star of the panel today?

HICKENLOOPER: I think I'm out of my league. I don't think I've ever had such a snappy song to enter a panel with, and I really am very suspicious. You're going to outclass me all the way through this.

MANSARAY: But okay, so Hopper wrote in to our panel discussion today. I really want to take this time to express the impact that the youth apprenticeship program had on me and my family. So CareerWise DC was a blessing to me and my family. It grants me a lot of financial independence and to such an extent that I became a big bread winner in my family. So that makes me really curious. I'm going to pose our first question today, that being how did you learn about youth apprenticeships? Like, where did you hear about this from? And then to follow on with that, what made you become such a national champion of youth apprenticeships? Like you saw something and you said the high school youth in the US, that's me. They need this.

HICKENLOOPER: I think you're a perfect example of someone that this opportunity was designed for. A guy named Noelle Ginsberg came into my office while I was governor. I was getting ready to run for reelection probably 11 years ago. And he had a plastic injection molding company, couldn't find qualified people for all aspects of the business. And somehow he ended up beginning to look around. He heard about apprenticeships and he went to Europe a couple of times and he had this notion that there could be

apprenticeships not just for plumbers, electricians, but for everybody, for people working in the insurance industry, people that want to work in a hospital, people I mean, everybody should have that opportunity when they're 16, 17, 18, when they're in high school to go spend part of their week working and getting paid and then part of their time studying things that would make them more successful at work. And this kind of work based experiential learning, there are a number of studies that show how successful that is and that so many kids the last couple of years, especially smart kids, the high school doesn't grip them. They don't see what they're learning as useful to their future and getting a a good job and a career. And apprenticeships deliver on that. And they can you know, in Europe, the president of UBS Bank, you know, Bank of Switzerland, the largest bank in Europe at that time, had just become he started out as an apprentice, not going to college and worked his way through college while he was working in the bank, then worked his way, got a masters, and then ended up becoming the CEO. I mean, that was a compelling story. So he got me to take 50 of our civic leaders of the heads of the largest foundations ahead of the superintendents of school for four large school districts, head of higher education, the head of community colleges. All these people, the CEOs, about 7 or 8 of our biggest employers, we all went and committed to spend a week together, which meant he made me spend a week. And I could tell you as a governor, I never spent more than three hours at one time on one thing because you're just pulled in so many directions and it was overwhelming how powerful was for all of us and what a great model that is to get all your civic leaders around of workforce and training and education, that kind of transition from from being a kid in to being an adult. It's such an important moment. And we all came back. I mean, we'd go out, they scheduled us, the ambassador, US ambassador to Switzerland scheduled us from about eight in the morning to 8:00 at night. And we'd go out and meet all these people, the businesses that were using apprentices in their in their businesses and how great they thought it was. And then the various educational entities that were training the kids. I mean, everyone loved the system and we'd come back at 8:00 at night and we didn't want to go to bed. We all said, Stay up and discuss. We'd usually break in 3 or 4 groups. We discuss all the things we'd seen, and that's sort of where career wise was created. We came back and, you know, how do we put this into action?

MANSARAY: Thank you. And I mean, wow, a week long trip and you had to be on your toes.

HICKENLOOPER: I tell people that never go, well, it sounds pretty cushy to me. It was not cushy, right? 12 hours a day of pretty intense, you know, trying to understand things and listening to people. But it was worth it. It was worth every minute.

MANSARAY: Yeah. And then you know, during those 12 hours of the day, I mean, you saw a lot you saw a lot of the successes of the youth apprenticeship and maybe you saw some other things, but like really stood out to you and told you, I need to bring this back to the US.

HICKENLOOPER: We came back with so many stories and so many kids. And Switzerland's great because, for instance, in Germany, you take this, the students take a test when they're in about seventh grade, eighth grade, ninth grade, they take tests. And based on those tests, you either go to the apprenticeship or you go on the university schedule. Switzerland, they let every kid decide their own. And we heard these stories about kids that were getting into trouble. They weren't engaged. And the moment they did the apprenticeship and they actually went somewhere during the week where someone was training them on stuff that was going to matter, that was going to help them, and they were getting paid. They could understand what was expected of them when they go to that first time when they go into a business. Most have never really been in an insurance company office or whatever the place of business was. And we can't we all came back with a half a dozen stories of transformative experience where kids felt they would have gone off and been lost. And because of the opportunity to be an apprentice, their life was forever changed. And, you know, I spent when I first first got into politics, I ran for mayor of Denver in 2003. And I was going to bring this the mayor and the city council closer together with the school board and the superintendent. Our other US senator, Michael Bennet, was my chief of staff. So and then we under while I was mayor, he became the superintendent of schools. And so we had this wonderful relationship. But during my campaign, I said, if I get elected, if I get elected mayor, I'll visit every school in my first four years. No one told me there were 161 schools in Denver. So but I went every week for those first four years. I spent spent two hours in a different school. And it you know, I heard so many stories there in that process of kids that were being lost or who dropped out and really lost their way. And that's what I saw. This is something that was going to be hard because it's just so complex. Right. How many different fields are there? How do you get businesses involved? How do you convince kids that this is a good thing for them? I mean, you can tell me about that, how they convince you. I guess I'm not supposed to ask questions.

MANSARAY: I mean, I feel like the one thing I can definitely comment on is that it's great that you've led such efforts to reclaim those children and roped them into something bigger. I'm definitely a product of that. You brought me into something way larger than I could have ever imagined.

HICKENLOOPER: Well, and you're the living proof of so many of those kids were the smartest kids, right? They weren't necessarily bookish, but they were the ones who were curious. They were sometimes the little teachers getting in their trouble one way or another or one thing would lead to another. But the brightest kids we were losing, and that's something this country can't afford. And I already know that's already true about you. Fracking.

MANSARAY: Thank you. And see, we're going.

HICKENLOOPER: To lose you. But you're one of the brightest.

MANSARAY: You know, this is a great way to flow into our next question. So this is not the only initiative that you've led to advance youth apprenticeships. Back in July of 2023, you as well as then senator but now governor elect of Indiana, Mike Braun, introduced the Youth Apprenticeship Advancement Act. And what was so surprising about this new piece of legislation is that it was supported by both political parties. It was bipartisan. And so, you know, my question for you is, you know, what about youth apprenticeship garners support from both political parties.

HICKENLOOPER: And that's that's such a good question, especially right now where the country is so divided and so many intense emotional responses to the new president, to the changes in control of the Congress. Apprenticeships are really just a larger reflection of our kids, which is a larger reflection of our future. And apprenticeships is that place where it's not Republican or Democrat. How do we make sure we have more opportunities for more of our kids? It's not Republican or Democrat. How do we make sure that we have a workforce that allows us continue to continue to lead the world in innovation and new ideas? This is something that Republicans and Democrats alike can support. And Senator Braun and I were the perfect example. I mean, Mike Braun's a very conservative guy on a lot of things we wouldn't agree on. But when we sat down four years ago and this is before you ever thought of running for or I think before you ever thought about running for governor. But we started talking about partnerships and how powerful could be if we somehow could go from where we are now to get to that point where where every kid got a real chance to create their own version of the American dream? We just both got so excited about that. And he had you know, he was an entrepreneur. He was his father had a business, and he made it a much larger business, but he was fascinated with how he would get, you know, the next generation of workers and make sure that they had the skills so that they could hit the ground running and be successful in his business and is now

having a hard time getting kids, you know, with that kind of preparation. So after that first meeting, we saw the alignment. And then since then, I think there are as many Republicans as there are Democrats that support apprenticeships. And it's I mean, here we are. This is only the 10th celebration of the sense, you know, apprenticeship week. How could that be? That should be the 100th or the 150th. I guess we didn't have high schools back 150 years ago. But anyway, Senator Braun and I both agreed that we would try to recruit from our different caucuses and from each other's caucuses, people that would support that. So we've got a there's a lot of people in the United States Senate who believe in apprenticeships.

MANSARAY: You know, that is so comforting to hear because it's like you said, and such a sense political spirit that we have going on in the US. This is one thing that everyone can agree. We need to come together on this. We need to invest further and the future of our youth and what's the way we're going to we're going to focus on youth apprenticeship programs. That's amazing. You know what? You know, just going to leave me answering my second question here, that being as we continue to advance forward in the future, Senator Hickenlooper, do you have any insight on what's it going to take to get new apprenticeship legislation across the finish line?

HICKENLOOPER: Well, I mean, I think it's hard because we have a status quo. And, you know, when I was I used to work I was a geologist. I mean, I'm the perfect example of apprenticeships. And I've had several different careers as a geologist got laid off when the company got sold, ended up starting a restaurant, led to other restaurants, then got into politics. Any time you have a status quo and you want to change it, that involves loss. All change involves loss. All loss has to be mourned and that the structure around how America thinks of apprenticeships is so sunk in. And I mean both for parents and because of the attitudes of parents, many kids have the same attitudes that apprenticeships are the second tier. You know, somehow if you can't do great at college, you should do apprenticeships, which is ridiculous, right? You can do an apprenticeship and still it's college. The only difference is somebody else pays for your college, right? I mean, that's what's wrong with that picture. And a part of the big challenge and I think one thing we've really got to work on changing to make apprenticeships a national movement is to get the parents to realize that this is an avenue by which their kids can be happier and more fulfilled and more engaged. You're going to get in less trouble that they're that that parent isn't feeling like, my kid's second class because they're an apprentice. I mean, being apprentice apprentice should be something that is kind of the gold standard, which once you are apprentice, you can have all kinds of choices that we've got to change the way people hear that word. I've been trying to think of a better word. We just get rid of the the old. I'm just kidding. I'm not

getting rid of the word apprentice. But I think that's one of the the real challenges is, is to make it okay for kids and their parents to to to understand their pressure. It is a really, really good thing. But also for businesses that I mean, you talk to the businesses that have been working with CareerWise or CityWorks here almost to a person, the business loves it because they get to know these kids, they get to hire them and see who's a good worker, who's not, who gets along with other workforce, who who really appreciates that industry or that that type of work. And so they get a better match when they make a full time job offer to somebody and they have a lot less turnover. Well, especially as we were hearing with the introductions, there are workforces so challenging, there's a diminishing opportunity for businesses to find good workers, that apprenticeships plays a bigger and bigger role. Right.

MANSARAY: That's Will's Senator Hickenlooper. Like, honestly, those insights really make people reflect on the opportunity that not only youth apprentices will have now and this, you know, dynamic working model, but also the opportunities that businesses get to have. If we all can just come together on this, you know, this is a good way to go into our next section. So you've given us a lot of good insights on what needs to happen at the top for legislation in order for youth apprenticeships to advance. But we should also take some time and reflect on what needs to happen at the bottom in order for youth apprenticeships to continue to advance. And I definitely started at the bottom. So when I first encounter youth apprenticeship, it was in my junior year at the French Technology Preparatory Academy, big tech if you don't you know, and I remember it being such a foreign word, like youth apprenticeships. What do you mean? You know, I lived in Ward eight all my life, and the only kind of language you heard there was call it like my high school always advocated for. Or you can go outside or you can start working just like that. And it's really not shocking that I didn't know much about youth apprenticeships and neither did my peers, because most apprenticeships in the U.S. cater to 29 year old white men. And, you know, Senator Hickenlooper, between you and I, that's not me. But I was able to get in there. Right. And even in recent testimony that you gave in which only 2.7% of apprenticeships will take place with youth between the ages of 16 through 18. You know, my question for you is, why do you think that number, only 2.7% is so low the way that it is in the U.S.?

HICKENLOOPER: Well, you're asking the right question again. And part of the reason it's so low is because the deck is stacked. So apprenticeships, what apprenticeships we do have have been really a door apprenticeships. You've got to be 18 or over and generally you got to be out of high school. So it defeats the very purpose for the type of apprenticeships we're talking about now. And it really does limit it to what we've seen historically. The the building trades like electricians, plumbers, which Lord knows we need a lot more

electricity, a lot more plumbers. I mean that's I look at apprenticeships for everybody as being a. Relentlessly good thing, right? For sure. You know, my brother was an automobile mechanic for almost 50 years and just loved it. He had a great life fixing cars. There's nothing diminishing about that or limiting. And I think the two the small, you know, 2.5%, 2.6% are not the percentage of kids who are actually taking advantage of people taking advantage of a precious. It's because there are so few opportunities for true youth apprenticeships. And it's really I mean, CareerWise was one of the first to start really pushing out. And we've got a couple of large grants to take the our idea and go up to other states and look at how could this work in a different state. And I think you kind of implied the the the benefits year that I mean, the states each do things a little bit their own way. States the cliché is states are the laboratories of democracy. So things get it's like a place where you can do experiments and we'll have what works in Colorado will get put in DC and I'll bet you anything yours isn't exactly like what we do in Colorado. It's probably been improved in ways, and you've had innovations that make it better, especially for DC. But ideally, as we as these laboratories of democracy in all the different states are working on apprenticeships, we also want to be able to come back and distill all those differences and improvements. And so what is the best model that we can go for and scale it at the at the federal level? I think we're within a few years of of being able to do that, assuming again, we can get best get past the bias in parents, the bias in businesses, we can get past some of the bottlenecks that we've had to deal with so far.

MANSARAY: Right. Very well said again. And, you know, that kind of leads me more into this we that you keep mentioning. Right. So in your proposed legislation. Whose job is it exactly to boost awareness about youth apprenticeships? Or another way to frame that is, you know, the misconceptions surrounding youth apprenticeships. Whose job is it going to, you know, swipe those out of the way?

HICKENLOOPER: Another great question. You're going to have your own talk show I can just see. The we found in in Colorado that the best place to kind of get the word out is through counselors like like guidance counselors. But but guidance counselors mostly just talk to kids in their second half, their junior the first half of their senior year. They're kind of getting guidance about what their career might be or especially those kids that want to go to college probably spend, you know, 80% of a guidance counselors time. We found that having counselor guidance counselors or just counselors, but starting in ninth grade and 10th grade really had a beneficial effect on changing the perception of kids when they hear the word apprenticeships. Because as you describe when you first heard it, you didn't know what it was. Youth apprenticeship. What's that mean? What's what's that entail is a good thing. Is there something in it for me? Something will work for

my future. And having an adult and most of our counselors CareerWise are kids that recently went through the system and either worked somewhere for a while or they went to college and got a degree or whatever. But they they came back and they wanted to make sure other kids have that same opportunity. So that's a good place. We look at what we are for, which is a big federal, you know, it's the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. Well, I'm dyslexic, so I always get those initials wrong. You have to acronyms are not my friends. I think that we always a place we're trying to find funding where we can get more counselors and begin to get that word out on a much larger scale. The funny thing about apprenticeships and all this kind of workforce training, if you look at the broader arc of workforce training and apprenticeships, there's are there are 14 different federal agencies that all touch it in some ways. So often in the federal government, you've got each different person has a different idea and it's, well, I'll do that in the Department of Labor. I'll do that in the power of energy. I'll do that in the Department of Education. And you come up with a grant a lot of great ideas, but you sacrifice your ability to really make a transformational change by not focusing that energy and having it in a place where I could do the most amount of good. So that's part of my feeling, is that ultimately that will probably be in the Department of Labor, but it also has to be collaborative with Department of Education because it it's really both.

MANSARAY: Right. Well said. Again, I feel like that's my favorite word for you after your response.

HICKENLOOPER: I'll be on my on my gravestone. Well said. John Well said. Hickenlooper.

MANSARAY: You know, and then I'm going to take a slight pivot here. Right? So you spoken about what needs to happen at the top with legislation in order to advance youth apprenticeships. You also spoken about what needs to happen at the bottom to advance youth apprenticeship. Well, let's look at the middle here. So my employment sponsor, when I was a career wise DC youth Apprentice, was a. Now, I, you know, really enjoy being at a center. It was an amazing company. I on board, went there as a human resource apprentice, and I spent two years on their North American onboarding team. Like, it was amazing. But I can't help but to acknowledge how rough it was to transition from my school environment over into the workplace environment. There were a lot of habits that I developed in high school, such as only being able to distinguish between teachers and faculty and peers that I couldn't necessarily bring into the workplace with me, where I had colleagues and and coworkers and whatnot. Right. And then, you know, something else that made the transition rough was that sense that I didn't really belong in such a professional environment. And it really goes back to, okay, well, we don't have a lot of numbers for you in apprenticeships in the first place.

Right. And so, you know, my question for you is, what exactly can Congress do to help schools become more equipped so that they can help students like I and many others to come when we transition into the workplace?

HICKENLOOPER: Stop asking such good questions. God is hard, and I'm not sure how much we can do other than counselors, because I think I mean, the school environment is what the school environment is. And you're exactly right. I love the fact that you've you've you've lived it. You've experienced how complex and how difficult that complexity is to navigate that when you go to a business where you've got not just coworkers, but all different ages colleagues, and you might have a mentor and you've got people that can affect your can discipline you and other people that can help you and kind of advise you. It is it's a whole different situation. And I think one thing that that that schools, the counselors can do and help push this forward is that when you're asking someone for help in your workplace and you're thinking, well, I'm not really you know, I'm at Accenture, I'm doing I'm working on onboarding and I'm just a kid in high school that every time an adult and this Switzerland's got all kinds of statistics on this, it was very compelling that every time an adult in a business helps a young person, an apprentice, figure something out or move forward, that adult feels more connected to their business, that they feel more engaged and they will put more of their attention, more focus in their workplace and be a better employee. So one of the compelling reasons that, again, that we try to make sure that all our counselors understand is that you're not asking someone to make a sacrifice when you are confused or sometimes challenged by the situations you find in your place of employment. You're actually offering them an opportunity and they get a chance to reach out and help you and feel good about themselves in the world, but also feel good about and better about where they where they work. And that's a that's not an insignificant thing. That's very powerful.

MANSARAY: Yes, I totally agree with that. And even though my transition was very rough, I feel my counselors at a Friendship tech prep academy were very helpful in ensuring that, hey, we know you need to be to work by this certain time. You need to have a schedule. But we know that you're still a student. So these are the compromises and accommodations that we can make. So, you know, as we start to get to the end of our fireside chat, unfortunately I love speaking with you, but all good things must come to an end, you know? Do you have any advice for me and like other youth apprentices, to come in the future as youth apprenticeships continue to advance and grow stronger?

HICKENLOOPER: So I'll give you a very concise answer because I've visited 161 schools, as I said, and I distilled it down to, you know, in the great arc of life, the three things that I came up with that everyone should do is work hard, be nice. Never quit. Because I think that persistence are important. But I would like to since I am so. Concise. I would like to ask your question, your question just because I think it's so. It's such a difficult challenge because by this time you've talked to a lot of your other friends at school and you've dealt with that, that you are beginning to believe in something like apprenticeships and all the kids you went to school with, or maybe the kids a year younger than you or two years younger than you in in your school are still have that bias against it. What have you found that is, how do you talk about it in a way that actually helps your other students, your other friends in high school understand it and be attracted to it?

MANSARAY: I always try to use very familiar language with my peers. We share a lot of the same background, and our background in Watergate was very in private, to say in the least. We faced a lot of insecurities together. So I always try to frame it. As you know, we were dealt the same hand, but I was able to use this opportunity to change my hand. And I tell to you, take this opportunity and change the cards that you were dealt.

HICKENLOOPER: Wow. You know, we do take on young employees when they're college students at the Senate office. So what I want to make sure I don't get kicked off the stage before I venture. You knew that, Frankie.

MANSARAY: Okay. Senator Hickenlooper, thank you so much for being on stage with me. Chatting you. Chatting with you was an absolute joy. You have so many insights and I cannot wait to see how far you're going to take this youth apprenticeship model across the U.S.. I cannot wait.

HICKENLOOPER: Thank you. I should thank you. It was mutual. Give her the hand, please. There's amazing. I'm feeling. Especially this. You know, I got lots of offers.

BROWN-WEAVER I didn't think it was on that first. Sorry. Hello, everybody. I am. I am. Before I get into introductions, there's one thing I want to ask the crowd. I want to try to be a little interactive with me. So when I hear something that I agree with or a good idea. Don't apply. Please, just give me a little snap. Thank you very much. And with that, hello, everybody. I am Jubei Brown-Weaver. I am 19 years old. I'm a package ad developer at Accenture, full time. And before I do, thank you. Thank you. And. And before I finish my

introduction, I have three beautiful ladies up here who will really express to you the importance of apprenticeships and how it can take us into the future. And so I'll let them introduce themselves.

SLOAN: Hello, everyone. My name is Leah Sloan. I was a part of the CareerWise DC 1224 cohort, just graduated. My apprenticeship was in finance. I'm also a full time college student and also a full time employee at Freddie Mac and the chief of human Resources.

DURANT: And good afternoon. My name is Lateefah Durant. I'm the vice president of innovation at CityWorks, DC, where we are working to advance the early career outcomes of youth and young adults here in the nation's capital and across our region. And one of our programs that we offer is our Careerwise DC Youth Apprenticeship program, where our young people are working for large companies like Accenture and Freddie Mac, but they're also working for small, locally owned businesses like Enlightened and Olympic Systems as well. And our young people are able to start this program as early as high school, working almost 2000 hours and earning industry credentials, mastering occupations such as finance, business operations, human resources, I.T.. And so we're just really excited and thrilled to be able to have our young people share with you their experiences as career wise, youth apprentices.

MANSARAY: Hi, everyone again. So I'm Frankie Mansaray, and I spent my three year youth apprenticeship program at Accenture on their North American on boarding team. And I was promoted to work in their global CEO's office and strategic programing.

BROWN-WEAVER And back to me, you know, I had to save the best for last. I am Jubei Brown-Weaver. Again 19. I'm a package developer at a center. I did my youth apprenticeship program also, and I started at 16 and cybersecurity. And yes, I will start with my my name. Age. Sorry. Now, when I asked the question, Leah, Frankie, I want to ask you more about your apprenticeship story. How did you hear about it and why did you decide to do it?

SLOAN: Okay, so I heard about it through the Academy of Fine Arts. I attended Kipp DC College Preparatory in DC. And once I heard about the program, I was extremely interested and a little insight about the NAF Academy of Finance I Kipp DC is They prepare you for a real life interview. They prepare you for a real workplace workshop development. So I was really ready. And I actually first got recruited into Accenture, like you two. But my schedule allowed me to better work towards Freddie Mac. So that's why I decided well,

once I heard about the program, I did my interviews and things worked out great for me. So that's how I'm here today.

BROWN-WEAVER And you, Frankie.

MANSARAY: So I heard about the youth program all through luck and a little bit of annoyance. So one of my favorite teachers at Friendship Tech Prep was very insistent on having students apply to the career wise DC Youth Apprenticeships apprenticeship program. And I finally caved. And I'll never forget the moment where, you know, I got that email from Noemi. She was on the CareerWise DC team at the time and she's like, Hey, Aliya, you you have an interview scheduled with the center. So it's time to do your your preparations, your week long presentation. So, yeah, that's how I initially encountered the internship at a very insistent teacher. And he was like, You need to do this. And I'm like, okay, I'll do it. Fine. Please.

BROWN-WEAVER Frankie, I can relate to your story just just a little bit with the luck aspect. I heard about my apprenticeship program on a random Tuesday morning and a class that I was not like in, so I was in the back, not paying attention. And a good counselor of mine's named Mr. Holmes came in and he was on a Zoom call with CareerWise. And all he asked of us was to simply give them the time of day just to see what they were talking about. And because I respect them so much, I put them out that the chess game that I was playing in the back of the class down and I started to pay attention and I learned everything about the opportunity, how it was paid, how how it is in a field of your choosing and how it was really you taking your career to turn next step. So with that look, Lateefah, what do you see more broadly as as apprentices progressed through their programs?

DURANT: Well, let me first just say, like these young people, you're amazing, but they're not an anomaly, right? Like, they they are amazing, but they are not the exception to the rule when it comes to youth apprenticeship. The youth apprenticeship experience is truly an options multiplier. And so what do we mean when we say options multiplier that our young people, after completing their apprenticeship, they can continue to pursue higher education or they can decide to go directly into the workplace or they can do both, both going to work and and progressing in their career while also working to attain their degree. And I think what's really great about our young people is that they have options and not only they have options, but they are empowered to make choices about their future, whether they want it to stay in their existing career field or the career field of their apprenticeship or do something else. They have the knowledge, they have the

skills. They have the academic skills, the technical skills, the life skills to be able to make those choices. And as you can see, you know, our young people are prepared both for pursuing post-secondary education and persisting through post-secondary education, as well as being prepared to go into the workplace and being competitive. You know, you just heard you talk about, I had this job offer and then I got that job offer. And Frank has had a million job offers. And so, as you know, they're not just doing a job, they're doing a great job. And they're getting access to opportunities that are affording them doors to be open to them in various career opportunities. So I'm just so proud of all the work. That they have accomplished in all the hard work that they put into it. But it really does give our young people options for how they see their future and what they want to do moving forward.

BROWN-WEAVER Thank you for speaking of all these opportunities, I wanted to ask and Frankie, how did you guys. Sorry about that. Supposed to be at work. You know, when work calls. Thank you. But I wanted to ask you all, how did you manage to juggle your apprenticeship along with the other obligations? Maybe at home, maybe at school, and maybe social life? I know for me personally, it started off a little rough and mine and my first year, especially socially, because I felt like I was I was working Monday through Thursday. Friday was the only day I stayed at school for the whole day and I felt like I was just missing so much and my social circle that when I was down on Fridays, everybody was laughing at inside jokes that I didn't understand. And so I wanted to act. How did you manage to to to to to juggle all those up, all those responsibilities?

SLOAN: I would say for me, I wanted to work too much and that was my problem. So now I'm experiencing the burnout four years later. But after school, I wanted to go to work like, my. Luckily, my fourth grade teacher, she was one of my favorites. She supported me. She let me just go to work. Let me do the work. I got it passed through four, which is like the people that control all of the credits and stuff like that. And I genuinely feel like that's still my problem to this day because I'm still in college and I'd rather be at work in my family. Like, I mean, well, I got to be State University, which is a local university, is not that local, but it's like about an hour away. I didn't want to go away because I wanted to keep my experience. I didn't want to stop. So I stayed because I can be remote, I can go in sometimes, you know, etc.. And I feel like for me, I still hear that from my family. You should be at school while you home. I'm like, I'm home because I got work tomorrow. Duh. So I feel like for me, the balance is really just me wanting to learn more. Like I know I can't get enough of learning, I can't get enough of growing. And it has really shaped my experience as an apprentice.

BROWN-WEAVER I have to say something to that because that's something I had to realize was that I wanted to I wanted this apprenticeship so bad and I wanted to learn so much that I realize I had to sacrifice maybe some social settings and the inside jokes to start truly building my career. But Frankie, let me give you a chance to answer this question.

MANSARAY: I definitely echo those sentiments as well. For me, it meant putting up more boundaries with families. So Advocate's Sister, I'm about eight years her senior and I was the de facto. Make sure you pick your sister up from school every evening. But once we got out of the pandemic and it was time to start commuting to work, that was simply impossible. Right? And it meant having to have that hard conversation with my mom and soon that like, Hey, look, I understand our family situation. We are from a single parent household, so there's not too many responsibilities that you can delegate to the people of this family. But when I signed my offer letter, I was taken on very much real work obligations and not ones where, mom, you can look at me and say, Well, I don't care about that. You're going to take your sister to school. And I'm like, No, mom, I'm unable to do that. For me, it was about setting some really clear boundary so that I can continue to meet what's expected of me when I go into the workplace.

BROWN-WEAVER And great. Now let's see if I have a question for you. I know that for me personally and Leah, I heard you mention this about the support from your school, from now one teacher who you know, best buddies, but arrestees. I know that for me, I didn't have that. I actually had a lack of support from my teachers, one in particular, who for some reason had it in his mind that my physics work was more important than my career in cyber security. Not knowing that once I left that classroom, I would never use physics. I damn my life. But but for the rest of my life, I would be working as I will not for the rest of my life. Hopefully I want to retire soon. I will be building a career in cybersecurity and for some reason he couldn't understand that what I was doing wasn't. It wasn't a fast and it wasn't temporary. This was my career. And so my question for you is how do you believe schools, program managers and policymakers can make it easier for students to balance multiple opportunities and priorities to succeed in their apprenticeships?

DURANT: First our policymakers, our district leaders, state leaders, they have to believe like they have to believe, that there is inherent value in going to work. You have to believe if you believe that the experiences that these young people are having academically, their technical skills, their durable skills, if you believe that that has value, then you will give our students credit for their work experience. They'll get high school credit

towards their diploma. If you believe that that work experience has value, you'll get credit towards your college degree, Right? And so it's a it's a question of what do you believe and what do you value. And if you believe that the workplace is as equal value to going off to work and working in your cybersecurity employment opportunity, then you will change the systems and structures. You will provide that schedule flexibility so that the young people person can get to work on time and work enough time that they can actually make a meaningful impact on the business where they're employed. You will change the climate. You will change the culture of your organizations such that your young people to feel supported in their work so that they are not only support in their work, but they're encouraged to go to work. Right. And that that AP course is seen as just that the workplace is seen as just as important as that AP course. Right. And that you really believe that work at the workplace is important and it adds value to our young people. You'll give them the supportive services they need to be able to persist in the workplace. You'll remove the transportation barriers, the childcare barriers. You will make sure that they are understanding what it is they need to know to be able to manage their time well, to be able to know how to call their employer and say, Hey, I'm going to be late today. You know, we talk a lot in education about being college and career ready. The question is, do we mean it? And if we mean it, then we have to dismantle the systems and structures that keep our young people from going to work. If we really mean it, then we have to put in those policies and practices that help facilitate our young people getting there. That may mean changing your counseling protocol. That may mean redoing your master schedule so that your high school students, when they're in your junior and senior year, can work a half day schedule to get those valuable skills not only in the classroom, but they can get those valuable academic technical life skills where better to learn them than in the workplace.

BROWN-WEAVER Literally. And that brings me to my next question, because what better to learn those in the workplace and get paid for it? So my next question to you, apprentices is I know for me personally, earning money while being in high school and working this apprenticeship was monumental. It has helped me not only change or improve the quality of my life, but the life of my friends and family around me. And I know that for me personally, I believe life is like a sandwich. No matter which way you flip it, the bread comes first. So my question to you is, what was that like? What was it like to earn two income and your apprenticeship while in high school?

SLOAN: For me, I would definitely say earning while learning was the most important thing to me because I also had to support myself. I was very independent. Most of my apprenticeship started and nothing has changed since and it will never change. Is that the stand? Is that the goal? And I definitely will say that I often

will find myself saying that this is something that I would do for free. But in reality, no, you know, I need to be paid for my time and my impact on the company work that I was doing. So I just feel like the earning aspect of things is so significant for our apprentices because typically they aren't paid is not paid. And I was so confused once I started doing, you know, more panels and more opportunities and learning and reading more that they emphasize the pay part. I'm like, Wow, that's like normal. You should be getting paid for your experience, your time and your impact on a company, and it's not normal. And I want to make that a standard for apprenticeships. Like, you know, we should be paid for our time, everyone else to pay for their time. Why our apprentices? We have to learn to make the world better because the youth is the future.

BROWN-WEAVER Agreed. And I want to highlight that that that phrase that you said that impact on a company because not only do do apprenticeships are helpful for the apprentices themselves, but they also do bring value to the company that they are apprentices that frankly, I do want to give you the floor.

MANSARAY: Thank you. So I definitely want to echo those sentiments again. And I would say earning by working definitely highlighted a shortcoming of minds, that being I didn't know how to manage money well and there weren't people around me that could teach me. How to manage that money well. And I would say it taught me how to be proactive about seeking out knowledge. Like very intentional knowledge that I needed to continue to be a real grounded adult. So that meant reaching out to know me. I distinctly remember the phone call, and I'm just like knowing me. I just keep seeing these deposits in my bank account, you know, twice a month. And I don't know what to do with the money. It's just there. I feel like I should be doing something more. And here she is teaching me how to budget. We say, look, we set up this tracker on Excel. That led to me getting my first for A1K at my company like Atlanta. So much money. Yeah.

BROWN-WEAVER Thank you for that. And I definitely have to echo that sentiment because, boy, that I did not know how to spend my money. First check I was at the mall about shoes. I bought clothes out and with I fly. Yes. But my money I spent better. Absolutely. And it was career wise, but also Accenture, who taught me the importance of that and helped me start my four on one K and my Roth IRA account for my retirement. It was it was down. So learning that importance of money was very much monumental. And Latifa, I want to ask you, what do you think about this?

DURANT: Well, I think you all have said it. All right. So, you know, not only is it about making money that you're able to contribute to your household, but also being able to make wise choices and planning for your

future. And one of the things that came to mind as you all were talking and not directly related to earning, but it's also just as part of what's growing in the youth apprenticeship world, which is degreed apprenticeship. And so people have, you know, been talking about youth apprenticeship, and now they're starting to wonder, well, what about degreed apprenticeship, right? So there are professions like teaching, like social work, like certain health professions where you actually need to have a college degree. And so there's an opportunity for us to partner with post-secondary institutions to be able to design rigorous structure programs where our young people can go to work and earn the degree in that. They're not put in this situation where they have to make a choice of either or. I need to earn money and I need to get a degree. And so why do we continue to separate them or why are we giving them opportunities, unpaid internships and things of that nature, right. Where they need to be able to support themselves, to be able to pay that college tuition, to be able to pay for their housing and other expenses. And so I think we're if we're able to find and partner with those post-secondary institutions that see the value of earning and learning, where you can design those programs as well as helping young people to see the relevance are you say you're sitting in the back of the class playing games. I like not paying attention, but but that's because there was a disconnect between what you were learning in the classroom and what you're what you would ultimately be doing in quote unquote, real life. And so colleges and post-secondary institutions have a unique opportunity to both honor the workplace as well as prepare you for that degree. It doesn't have to be an either or. And even more so, colleges should also be giving credit for that experience that you're getting in the workplace. You know, if they're not already, like how might your institutions come to the table to say, you know, we value the work that you're doing, You're working in finance at Freddie Mac, You're right. You're working. So how can we give you a college credit for the work experience that you have as well? And so going back to your questions, you pay in terms of, you know, earning and learning. They don't have to be separate. You don't have to earn over here. You shouldn't have to learn over there. Apprenticeship gives us a way to bring those two things together.

BROWN-WEAVER Thank you very much for that answer. And with that, I want to go into my next question or how we can expand this opportunity to more students. I know for me, I have this story that I like to tell about this friend of mine who is my direct counterpart. He is me. He has the same drive, he has the same work ethic. We literally went to work in the same field. We are quite literally studying for the same certifications. And yet because of the luck of the draw that I had on that random Tuesday morning when my counselor came in and did that presentation on on apprenticeships, I'm a full time package app developer at Accenture making well over \$20 an hour. And the field that I want to be in. And yet because he done it, he works for he works part time at Target making minimum wage. And it's like it's sad to see that I simply just

got lucky that day. I simply saw that opportunity and I wanted it so bad that I chased it with every fiber of my being. I wanted that opportunity. I was a junior. A high school who had no idea what he wanted to do. I have no idea what's going to happen afterwards. I knew that college wasn't for me because it really isn't for everybody. But I didn't know where I was going to go. And that apprenticeship changed my life. And so with that, I want to assure how do we think we can expand these apprenticeships to more people? What would make apprenticeships an option for more people?

SLOAN: Leigh Okay. So I would say I recommend like events like these. I feel like we should go to those high schools, go show them what it looks like. I know my favorite college counselor from my high school. She mentions me a lot in her seminar classes and the students are very impressed. They have comments, but why are I invited to talk to them, to motivate them, to get them excited, to get them to want to apply? You know, a lot of the times at this age when you're a junior or sophomore senior in high school, you don't know what's going on. Everyone's seventh in your head that college is the right way. It's the only way. It is not the only way. There's plenty pass these days, especially in modern times. But I specifically strongly feel that if we were like this panel today, if we were to go and, you know, encourage more high schools, encourage more people that are in the schools and emphasizing that college is not the only way. Like, for example, would you be he's full time and full time doing both. But I would rather be doing it work completely because I'm trying to keep my family from a standard school. But I just genuinely feel like if we were to get in those schools and put it in the students heads that there is other opportunities for you. You don't have to go to college. You can learn and get real workforce development and experience.

MANSARAY: Frankie Very well said. Leah And I think it makes such a difference to have a Youth Apprentice alum like myself, like Jubei, and like to be to go to the schools because you hear a lot about how good X, Y, and Z is going to be at the top, but you have to bring it down. Okay? The people that you've helped grow up here, you have to ask them to come down and say, okay, the same value that the people at the top were able to create in your lives. We need you to explain that value to these new group of people. That's why when I finished my youth apprenticeship journey, I'm like, okay, I want to continue to be the biggest ambassador for youth apprenticeships because I recognize and I acknowledge the impact that it has on my life. And I know that I share such similarities with the, you know, target market for youth apprenticeship. So it's like whenever I have an opportunity to sit in front of people and just, you know, go on and on and on about, it was so great, I got to do this. I got to do that. I didn't even think that I was capable of doing this, that in the third, I'm just like, I'm always excited to do it. We have to bring it down. We have to just bring it down.

BROWN-WEAVER I agree with that wholeheartedly, which is why, despite love and being in the limelight, I will never say no to one of these opportunities to journey now from career wise to Brookings, because I believe it or it's as the as the Echo one of the success stories that truly highlight the the the possibility that apprenticeship would bring. Now, Lateefah, I wanted to ask your your opinion on this on what we can do to expand apprenticeships. What do you believe the barriers are? What can make it easier for for employers and what and what the effort and what infrastructure we need to truly bring this to the top?

DURANT: We need businesses that are committed to investing in our young people that are willing to hire and develop talent. But there are some barriers to doing that, right? As much as we need businesses to come to the table, we need to remove some of the barriers they face, barriers around skill misalignment and training costs and bias in the workplace. Right? And so, you know, if you invite business and industry and designing what students are going to learn in school, how they're going to learn it in school, what the sequence is that they're going to learn it in school, that has an impact to make sure that our young people are better prepared to meet the demands of the workplace. If we are able to remove some of the costs of training by leveraging our high school courses and our community college courses and others to provide that technical instruction, we help to bring and draw employers in. If we have events like this where you can hear our wonderful young people and you can bring down those misperceptions and preconceived notions of what our young people can and cannot do in the workplace. Have you seen them? Right Like that will bring employers to the table. And then, you know, being an intermediary, we're able to help broker relationships for our businesses with the schools helping to remove those barriers. Making sure that our young people were able to get out of class one time to get to work. Making sure that you had the transportation schedule set up to be able to get there. Making sure that we're helping the employers to recruit young people who are actually interested in the field in which they're recruiting. They might not have even heard about it before. Right. And so are our our staff. I'm looking at our great staff out here who go in and help the young people to even understand what a night security specialist is versus with a package developer versus, you know, human resources associate. I mean, all these careers that they might not have had access or exposure to making sure that they are being able to make informed decisions about their future and what path, what occupation they want to pursue, and then making sure that we're providing those wraparound services and supports so that our young people can show up as their best selves. Right? Making sure that they're taking care of both personally and professionally so that they can be their best on the job. And so those are just some of the things that we can do to help employers to really come to the table so that you all, not just you,

but so that your contemporaries, so that your peers so that your younger brothers and sisters, so that your friends in the neighborhood can have access to these opportunities as well. And it's not a one off. A by the way, and I happen to look out like this needs to be institutionalized in such a way that it's not an exception to the rule in the future, but that it actually becomes a viable, sustainable, ubiquitous pathway with going to college.

BROWN-WEAVER Thank you for that. Let's give it answers. Go ahead. Snap it out. That was beautiful. And I agree so much because when I first heard when I heard the word apprenticeships, it was in the same boat as internships. And to me, it was getting coffee and making copies and this and that. And then and a third. It wasn't a full pathway to a career. And with that said, I want to take some questions from the audience, if the audience had any questions. I have one from the people online. If I need some time to think. But yes, please.

AUDIENCE QUESTION: You talked a lot about you talked a lot about balancing a lot of your different obligations. And I'm wondering and you also actually mentioned bias in the workplace, which I think is a reality that we often don't discuss in apprenticeship. So I'm wondering if there were any challenges that any of you faced where you thought about leaving your apprenticeship program early and what kept you in it. And then similarly, if you had, you know, some of your peers who ended up not completing, whether you saw some of the same challenges there.

BROWN-WEAVER Leah, I saw you. Okay.

SLOAN: So I'll start now when we carve out for me, there was so many days where I wanted to leave my apprenticeship. I'll be transferring. I'm out of the situation now. My manager and I did not get along very well and I won't say didn't get along very well. I would just say that I was I advocated some move. I switched about six times during my time and that was hard for me being an apprentice. I was still in high school like being switched around. I didn't know exactly what I was doing. I didn't know who's only my manager tomorrow, next month, but I was put under a director and with that they reported directly to the VP of the company. Not much time for me. Was that mean? I didn't have much work experience my experience lacked. I will often have times with getting pay because she didn't have enough work for me, but I was eager to work. She forgot to send me something. You know, I had so many challenges and I just wanted to quit because I was like, I know there's somewhere where I can give my all. I know what I'll be able to make. And this is

hourly. So I depended on the experience. I depended on the earn and learn part of things. And I often had burdens with that too much for my liking. So I oftentimes did want to stop and, you know, retract somewhere else. But I'm so glad that I stuck it through. And I feel like one of the biggest things for me sticking it through was just to be able to say, I finished my three years completely. And luckily for me, I was always eager to work over as much as I can. I know we have like limits to what CityWorks allows for being a student, but I would say I finished early. So at the point where I really wanted to leave, it was the summer before graduation. So like you can leave, you still get your credentials. When I'm like, I want to say I did my three years then full time. Also, I definitely say I am a perfect example of someone that wanted to leave because I wanted to experience so much. But the one on one experience that I got in my team was my manager normally had time for me. I wasn't a part of the group checking ins. I'm like, I'm a part of the team. Why am I not a part of the Friday check? And, you know, there was so many things that I felt like I just wasn't a part of my experience towards the end that really was challenging for me. But I'm so glad I overcame and it was great. Like, again, this is the perfect expense for this will happen to someone, you know, a college graduate or someone in their 30s, you know, starting out a new team and this is a burden that they'll face.

BROWN-WEAVER Frankie, anything you want to say on that?

MANSARAY: So I do have a story to share. And it wasn't necessarily about me, but it was about my mentee. And she joined around the same time that Drew Bey had joined and she was having a lot of problems with her manager. There was a lot of tension in their relationship and I remember strongly encouraging her to just do a show and, you know, change your teenager manager, reach out to someone else, because I think at this point the relationship between you and her is not very suitable. And unfortunately, it got to a point where my mentee ended up getting dismissed from the program, unfortunately. And I really goes back to what Leah was saying on when you realize there's a problem, there's a disconnect. You want to really advocate for yourself, so just move away from there. And I will say that a censure was like very well censure. But the response to this was just like a lesson to be learned. Unfortunately, like, you know, some people circumstances will be good. You know, you will have a great relationship with your manager, but you also have to know when to take the initiative and say, okay, we're not bonding right now and that's okay, but I do need to go under someone else. Supervision, Right. Been able to take that call?

BROWN-WEAVER Yes, I like that word. You use advocacy. I feel like that's a big part of you building your career. No matter what you want to build your career, and especially an apprenticeship as a as a young

person trying to earn and learn, you have to advocate for yourself. If you feel like you're not getting the experience, if you feel like you're not meshing well, which I know which a supervisor. I know for me, when I first got that apprenticeship, I was doing something called scrubbing, which if you're not familiar with it, it's when there is a PowerPoint, which has a lot of client data and a lot of confidential data in it. And, you know, Accenture works with a lot of people. We don't want start mixing and matching. And so scrubbing is when you go through and you take all the client data or the the confidential data out of the PowerPoint and essentially turn into a template. Now that has nothing to do with cybersecurity or art whatsoever. And so simply I felt like I wasn't doing enough. And I advocated that to my supervisor. And with that three months, you know, yeah, you learn how to code. I was writing my own programs. I became a software developer. So I feel like the advocacy is a big part of apprenticeships. Another question Do I have a question in the back behind you?

AUDIENCE QUESTION: Thank you. Hi, everyone. I want to start by saying this has been incredible. You all are amazing young people. You are doing incredible work. And it's just been so inspiring listening to all of you. So I work at the National Governors Association, working with governors on post-secondary policy. And so the piece of this that's really interesting is the idea of doing both together. And Leah, I heard you mentioned that part of why you chose Boise State is so you could keep your job. And so I'm curious if you could talk a little bit more about what was influencing that decision. There are obviously a lot of other institutions in the area. Why did Billy stick out to you? And Francie, if you had a similar experience where having this work experience influenced your post-secondary choice or your college choice? I'd love to know some more about what what influenced it.

SLOAN: Okay. Thank you for that question. So when it came time to narrow down what I was going to do after high school, I wanted to stick with my apprenticeship because career path gives you an option. You can go to college and do part time, or you can become a full time employee. I personally felt like I was very lost and stuff. So then we're having a conversation. My family and my counselor and I strongly felt like because my apprenticeship was remote, so I had a lot of flexibility, but I still wanted to be in person or like, for example, I'll go into our communications meetings once a month and, you know, just get network a little bit. I chose we state because it is HBCU. It wasn't too far. It's about 40 minutes away from my home. And I just chose the university because specifically this as a way to own my options. I had to chart Freddie Mac and my apprenticeship was partnered with them and they did a chart taking that the previous year. Some of my I can be a part of that event. You know, I can show them that, you know, I they're here because you know typically

the internships in college and I'm saying that now they emailed me every day the visit department is emailing like, hey, check out this internship. And I just wish that more colleges had that opportunity. You know, apprenticeships happen and start in high school. You don't have to get to college or graduate college to get an internship. But I definitely wanted to stay local because Freddie Mac is in McLean, Virginia, so I can still, you know, go person and do both. And generally, because I still a part of me wanted that experience and. I got my apprenticeship. I genuinely just wanted to work. Like, for example, one of my college classes, I was in finance for 22 last year. We were doing something that I learned years ago and I was helping my peers. Like, this is easy. And they're like not understanding like, I did this so long ago and not trying to like to my own horn. But this is a perfect example of why the credit should be given. When you get the experience in the workplace. I'm in college, my professors on the older side of things, and he's trying to break down things that I'm, you know, young, a freshman in college, trying to teach my peers that are probably saying years, etc., about the workplace development. So I chose b c because I still wanted that experience and I wanted the learning experience of my apprenticeship more. So I tried to narrow in both and still stay in the area.

MANSARAY: So just to reiterate that I'm currently a junior student at the Catholic University of America, and I'm pursuing my Bachelor's of Science in Business administration, and I have two concentrations and human resources and entrepreneurship. Now, if you were to ask me that same question when I was a senior in high school, I wouldn't be able to tell you anything like that because I didn't know what my prospects were. Yes, I was book smart. I graduated from Friendship Tech Prep salutatorian, so I knew I had the brains. But where exactly could I apply those brains? And again, nobody in my environment was in corporate America. I couldn't go to my mom and speak to her as chief of staff or human resources. There was nothing like that going on. So when I became a career wise DC youth princess and I got, you know, that firsthand experience of the corporate world, especially from an h.r. Perspective, i got to co facilitate new joiner orientation. I got to do a lot of onboarding administrative tasks. I'm just like, wait a minute. I think sometimes i think something's up here. I think this is me. Look how well I'm excelling in this field right now. I need. I need to stick with this. So, know, I decided to commit to Catholic University, and I was like, okay, well, I know I'm a business student. I don't care. What are the stereotypes about business people? I know that's what I am. This is where I excel at. So you can say that this youth apprenticeship had everything to do with my decision to go into college and study exactly what it is I'm studying now.

BROWN-WEAVER I don't have a personal story simply because I didn't choose to go to college. But I have a friend who I know that he did his apprenticeship along with me at Accenture and LTA, which is local tech

support. And throughout his apprenticeship, he decided to go to college. He went to Maryland, I think, yeah, college part. And he was doing an apprenticeship. I mean he was doing his degree and i.t. But working at the apprenticeship and getting a feel of what that were actually look like as a career, he noticed that that's not what he really wanted to do. And he's always been big on cars. He's, he has an engine for brain and so he he he switched his pathways and now and then and now he goes to Lincoln Tech, which is a I think it's a small so it's a smaller college, more hands on. It's almost like a trade school where it where it allows you to to to learn that hands on skill and so to speak for for him. I know that apprenticeship helped him shape his his decision for his degree. No I know how to question in the back and the very back right there in the blue shirt.

AUDIENCE QUESTION: I'm interested in the relationship between what you're learning in your coursework and the apprenticeship one, whether you found them connected and two whether the apprenticeship helped or hurt because on one hand might give you more motivation. On the other hand, you have less time.

BROWN-WEAVER You mean in college or?

AUDIENCE QUESTION: In whatever courses you're taking, whether high school. Or college?

BROWN-WEAVER I know that. And high school. My apprenticeship is what kept me motivated because like Senator said earlier, high school really loses a lot of kids because it forces this information onto you that that you're really never going to use a day in your life. Like, can I get a show of hands? A who really uses algebra? And when was the last time you used and what do you do, sir? Okay, okay. Okay. So maybe a couple of people bail loan me. I know that I never have. And so I, like Frankie said, I was. I was booksmart. I could get the work done, but I did not have a lot of motivation to write those essays or do that physics work. And so I was sort of a none, I would say, above average student. My GPA was 2.8. It's nothing special, but it's not bad either. I did enough to just get by because I knew that all I needed was this diploma to say I got the diploma. But all the real work that's going to go into my career is happening outside of school. School is not teaching me anything that I would truly apply to my real life. And so I would say that my apprenticeship motivated me because if you started failing, you can do the apprenticeship no more. So I kept my I kept my grades. I did what I had to do so that I could do what I wanted to do. Leah, Frankie?

SLOAN: I would say that the apprenticeship helped me out specifically because I feel like in college, you know, the first two years you're doing your prerequisites, which is history. The things that have nothing to do with what I'm doing at work. Literally, when I leave my class, I would say like, for example, for Abu, you say, Well, not even if we say I would say generally that once you get to those courses, they give you examples about, well, you know what to do in the workplace. I feel like I got that experience and I think in it four years I graduated my apprenticeship. But now I am a full time employee at the office of the Chief of Human Resources. And now I genuinely feel like the experience that you get in a workplace cannot equal to those college courses, in my opinion. I mean, of course they can help. You can train, you can teach you things, but I still like the hands on experience is what matters, you know, because they're not going to teach you how to structure up a meeting, how to make notes for the VP of your company, or the CEO of your company, which is something that my day to day work looks like. And I just genuinely feel like it would be much better if we can get those credits for the things that we're doing in our workplace because those things matter more to me and I know some other people, but I feel like the coursework they were giving is just structure on getting a degree rather than the work experience.

BROWN-WEAVER All right. I'm getting the time cue to wrap it up.

SLOAN: You had a question.

BROWN-WEAVER I know, but I got a time for you to wrap it up.

BROWN-WEAVER Okay. And I'm sorry that I didn't get to everybody's question, but unfortunately, I do have to conclude. Forget the paper from a the heart. All I really want to say in this closing remarks is that keep in mind what you heard today, just the stories that that you heard, the the how apprenticeships have changed lives and. And please know that it is real. I am rue. I am a success story and I want to better apprenticeships and the infrastructure of apprenticeships so that the so that the kids behind me, the future of this company can have more success stories. Thank you.