



PA House of Representatives
Republican Policy Committee

128, Main Capitol Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120
(717) 260-6144

Rep. Joshua D. Kail
Chairman

PA House Republican Policy Committee Hearing

"Developing Our Workforce"

February 2, 2023 at 1:30 p.m.

**Cranberry Township Municipal Center
2525 Rochester Rd.
Cranberry Twp., PA 16066**

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| 1:30 p.m. | Welcome and Pledge of Allegiance |
| | Workforce Challenges Panel |
| 1:45 p.m. | Filippo Lombardo
<i>General Manager, Domenico's Ristorante</i> |
| 1:50 p.m. | Stacy Hepinger
<i>President and CEO, Right at Home</i> |
| 1:55 p.m. | Jeff Nobers
<i>Executive Director, Builders Guild of Western PA and Pittsburgh Works Together</i> |
| 2:00 p.m. | Questions for Workforce Challenges Panel |
| | Workforce Development Panel |
| 2:20 p.m. | Carrie Amann, MPA
<i>Executive Director, Pennsylvania Workforce Development Association</i> |
| 2:25 p.m. | Kenny Broadbent
<i>Business Manager, Pittsburgh Steamfitters Local Union 449</i> |
| 2:30 p.m. | Tom Bender
<i>Council Representative, Eastern Atlantic States Regional Council of Carpenters</i> |
| 2:35 p.m. | Questions for Workforce Development Panel |
| 2:55 p.m. | Closing Comments and Conclusion |



Testifier Biographies

PA House of Representatives Policy Committee Hearing
"Developing Our Workforce"



Filippo Lombardo General Manager

A dedicated, full-time employee for nearly 20 years, Filippo serves as the General Manager for Domenico's Ristorante. Domenico's, a family owned and operated establishment, has been a staple in the Cranberry Township community for over 35 years.

Stacy Hepinger President and CEO, Right at Home

Right At Home North Pittsburgh became a part of my life in 2016, while I was helping my family care for my grandmother prior to her passing. Caring for a loved one at home is the greatest gift you can give them; however, it can also be very challenging for those providing the care. Realizing that we needed some extra support we began to explore the option of hiring an in-home care agency.

Right At Home came highly recommended, and from their knowledgeable office staff to the amazing caregivers it was easy to see why. The quality of care my grandmother received and the peace of mind that Right At Home brought to my family made a difficult time a little bit easier. For me personally, through this experience I discovered that I could provide the same compassion and support to other families in need.

I joined the Right At Home family in 2018, where I received the professional training and the support needed to become a caregiver. Working day to day with our clients sparked my passion for the in-home care industry. Through that passion I transitioned into the office to learn the administrative side of in-home care.



Stacy Hepinger
President and CEO, Right at Home (cont.)

In 2020 I had the opportunity to become the office manager for Right At Home overseeing the day-to-day operations of the agency. I have worked closely with Jim Duchak over the last two years and was honored when he informed me of his plan to retire and offered to sell me the agency.

Outside of the office I enjoy kayaking, fishing, and swimming with my husband and children. I can also be found on the sidelines of my kids sporting events or in the audience of their choir or musical performances.

Right At Home has given me a professional passion and I am excited to use that passion to continue providing top quality service to our clients. Improving the quality of life for those we serve is a very personal mission to me. I look forward to being your agency of choice for years to come.



Jeff Nobers
**Executive Director, Builders Guild of Western PA
and Pittsburgh Works Together**

A graduate of Duquesne University, Jeff serves as the Executive Director for the Builders Guild of Western Pennsylvania. The Builders Guild is a unique labor/management initiative launched by the building and construction trade unions of western Pennsylvania and local professional contractor associations to promote quality construction, provide a forum for labor and management to work together on issues of common concern, and to create career opportunities for those interested in working in the demanding and challenging construction industry.

Jeff also serves as the Executive Director for the coalition of business, union, and civic leaders known as Pittsburgh Works Together. Pittsburgh Works is committed to creating an inclusive vision of economic progress that embraces and respects both traditional legacy industries and emerging ones, while honoring the diversity of cultures and traditions inherent to each, while ensuring a sustainable environment. The coalition seeks a Pittsburgh and a region in which the lines between “old” and “new” economy are erased and respect is shown for our work ethic and dedication to community, while building a future for all.

Carrie Amann, MPA
Executive Director, Pennsylvania Workforce
Development Association

The Pennsylvania Workforce Development Association (PWDA) is the voice of workforce development in the commonwealth to key decision and policymakers at the federal, state and local levels. Serving Pennsylvania's local workforce development system, PWDA members include the twenty-two (22) local workforce development boards, system providers, as well as business, education, training, human services, literacy, and community development partners located across the Commonwealth. PWDA prioritizes Advocacy, Policy, Professional Development, and more for their industry and members.



Prior to her role as Executive Director of PWDA, Carrie served in the Governor's office as Deputy Secretary of Policy and Planning, and worked within the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry, Department of Corrections, and the Pennsylvania Workforce Investment board.



Kenny Broadbent
Business Manager, Pittsburgh Steamfitters Local
Union 449

Local 449 (Pittsburgh, PA) Business Manager Kenneth J. Broadbent has been a proud member of his local union and the UA for more than 31 years, beginning with his five year apprenticeship in his local's training program. In addition he graduated from the UA Instructor Training Program and holds an American Welding Society Qualification as a CWI (Certified Welding Inspector). He has also attended three years of HVACR classes at CCAC and classes for Non-Destructive Testing.

After working in the field, Kenny contributed to the apprenticeship program that provided him with his education by serving as a welding instructor from 1981 until 1989. The members of Local 449 then elected Kenny to the position of president in 1992, business agent in 1996, and business manager in 1999. Since 1999, he has served continuously as business manager of Local 449.

Kenny Broadbent

Business Manager, Pittsburgh Steamfitters Local Union 449 (cont.)

Since 2007 and while continuing to serve the Local 449 membership as business manager, Kenny also represents UA members as Vice President for District 2, encompassing Pennsylvania, Indiana, Ohio, Michigan, Kentucky, West Virginia, Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia. Kenny brings an exceptional depth of experience and knowledge of local union operations to his role on the UA's General Executive Board.

In addition to his service as a Local 449 officer, Kenny has held other elected and appointed positions. These positions include serving as a member of the National Association of Parliamentarians; member of the Apprentice and Journeymen Training Committee of the Heating, Piping, and Air Conditioning Industry; serving on the Triangle Technical Institute's HVACR Board; vice president of the Pennsylvania Building Trades; and president of the Pennsylvania Pipe Trades.



Tom Bender

Council Representative, Eastern Atlantic States Regional Council of Carpenters

At about 45,000 members strong, the Eastern Atlantic States Regional Council of Carpenters (EASRCC) encompasses much of the original colonies, covering Pennsylvania, New Jersey, West Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, and Washington D.C.

In recent years, Tom and the EASRCC have focused on reaching out to high school students, educating them on the benefits of joining the Carpenters Union and the advantages of being skilled in the trades with the highest level of training in the country.

Highlighting and utilizing programs, such as Career Connections and the Carpenters Apprentice Ready Program (CARP), EASRCC supplies students with knowledge and education that would give them a leg up heading into an Apprenticeship Program, should they choose to go in that direction.

Filippo D. Lombardo
General Manager, Domenico's Ristorante
Written Testimony for Policy Committee Hearing: Empowering Our Workforce

We've been in business in Cranberry for almost 40 years. I have been back full time for almost 20 years and have never experienced the staffing issues we are dealing with now. We are paying a very competitive wage (higher than most businesses), have offered signing bonuses of up to \$5,000 and still cannot find staff. We use platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Indeed and Craigslist. There have been times that I've had 50 interviews scheduled over 3-4 weeks and not one person shows up. On the rare occasion that people do show up they have no experience, no steady ride, do not want to work the available shifts or want to be paid in cash. We cannot remain open 7 days because it is taxing to the staff we have. The customers are out there, we just do not have the staff to handle the business. Which in turn frustrates our customers and see open tables and no one to take care of them. We only take 2 to 3 banquets/events per week due to staffing and there are times we cannot open our dining room due to having a private event. We have never experienced anything like this. Our family has been in this industry for over 50 years.

Testimony For Republican Policy Committee Hearing - 2/2/2023

Stacy Hepinger – owner Right At Home

Good afternoon, I would like to thank the committee for allowing me to speak today. My Name is Stacy Hepinger, and I am the owner of Right At Home in Harmony. Right At Home provides in home caregivers to seniors and adults needing added support to remain safely in their homes. Home Health and Home Care agencies like mine provide valuable support in the homes of our clients assisting them with their ADL or Activities of Daily Living, for example assisting with meal planning, preparation, to promote healthy nutrition, assisting with dressing, bathing, and other personal hygiene, assisting with mobility and social interaction. These services are designed to promote health and safety in the homes of our clients. By allowing our seniors to age safely and gracefully in their homes this can decrease the strain on the diminishing resources of the medical system. A number of emergency room trips and hospital admissions can be prevented by these services. Simply by having a caregiver walking with a client, assisting a client when transferring from sitting to standing, or reminding a client to use their cane or walker, we can help minimize the risk of fall in the home. Helping a client plan and prepare a meal promotes healthy nutrition and helps prevent dehydration. Unfortunately, with so many in need of service, the funding for service through Medicaid do not allow Home Care Agencies like mine the ability to pay our caregivers what they are worth. In Butler County the reimbursement rate paid to my agency for service is \$21.48 an hour via the Pennsylvania Medicaid Waiver program. This does not allow much room to pay our caregiver what they are worth and caused many agencies to shy away from working with the Pennsylvania Medicaid Wavier program. The average cost for service paid out of pocket is \$29.00 per hour, and many agencies have minimum requirements for number of hours and days per week, this average requirement is 20 hours per week.

Even before the pandemic our industry was already suffering from a caregiver shortage. This fact was made worse post pandemic for many reasons. The biggest reason is that the average starting pay for a caregiver is \$12.00 per hour, and at this rate agencies like mine are not able to be competitive in the current job market. Another fact is that smaller agencies like mine are not able to offer competitive health care coverage and 401k options. We offer flexible schedules, paid time off and new hire and retention bonuses to try to stay competitive in the job market. The other issue that home care agencies face is the stigma that caregiving is an unskilled entry level job. I know firsthand that that preconception couldn't be further from the truth. My career in this industry began as a caregiver, first personally as I took care of my grandmother before she passed away, and then professionally when I was hired as a caregiver for Right At Home. When I was hired I had no professional caregiving experience. To Right At Home every caregiver is an investment in our success. All of our caregivers receive 12 hours of online training along with 5 hours of hands on training in our office including CPR, before they go out into the field to work with our clients. In addition to the initial training all of our

caregivers have 8 hours of annual online training and 3 hours of hands-on refresher training. We also conduct on site supervised visits to observe our caregivers while working directly with the clients. With all of the training, and compassion it takes to be a caregiver it is important that they are given the professional respect that they deserve. The current onboarding expense to hire a new caregiver is \$200.00, this includes paying for all required screenings (PA State background check, Finger printing and Federal Criminal check, PA child abuse clearances) 2 step Tuberculosis (TB) test, Drug testing, DMV check, Exclusionary Screening for care workers, payment for all the training hours, CPR certification, along with the expense of advertising the job openings. All of these expenses are paid up front before a caregiver ever works a shift with a client. My agency always supports our caregivers with open and honest communication. My administrative staff offers years of industry knowledge and experience that you just can't get anywhere else.

All of these factors, the caregiver shortage and the low reimbursement rates are making it harder for those who need the help the most to receive care. Being a caregiver is the most important and rewarding job I have ever had, that is why I embraced the opportunity to learn the administrative side of the industry. I have gained valuable knowledge and a deeper understanding of the need for well trained and dedicated caregivers with my role as Director of Operations. When the opportunity presented itself to become the owner of the agency that I love, I knew that working in this industry was more than just a career it was truly a calling. It is important work that these agencies do and we need the help of leaders like you to effect change to make sure that we can continue to improve the quality of life for those we serve. Thank you for your time today.



Labor & Management ▶ Building Our Region's Success

Testimony of Jeff Nobers, Executive Director Builders Guild of WPA to the Republican House Policy Committee.

Topic: Developing our Workforce. How to better prepare our workforce to meet the needs of Pennsylvania employers.

Thursday, February 2, 2023

Cranberry Township Municipal Center

Chairman Kail, committee members and others in attendance. Good afternoon. Thank you for asking me to testify today to outline and answer any questions you may have regarding the significant challenges we face in workforce development.

I'm Jeff Nobers, Executive Director of the Builders Guild of Western Pennsylvania a labor management organization comprised of union building trades and contractor organizations, and of Pittsburgh Works Together a labor-business-workforce alliance focused on economic development and creating a diverse portfolio of jobs in our region and state.

Our members face workforce challenges every day. Literally thousands of good paying positions go unfilled in the construction, manufacturing, utility, and energy industries. This is not unique to the industries my organizations represents or to Pennsylvania - every major metro area in our country has a workforce problem. And so does every industry healthcare, tourism, retail, transportation, hospitality all struggle to fill their open positions.

We continue to lose population across our state -- we are approaching, if not already at a crisis level. Two-thirds of Pennsylvania's counties lost population from 2010 to 2020, a combination of residents moving away and deaths outnumbering births – an issue that especially affects many of our counties in southwestern Pennsylvania.

Overall Westmoreland and Fayette Counties were #2 and #3 in population loss among the suburban/rural counties in the top regions in the country. So, at a time when we have thousands of unfilled careers, we have a declining population, and the world has a declining birth rate.

There are many factors that impact workforce development. Addressing them will not be easy and will require some out of the box thinking:

- Create more and varied opportunities – this means having a diverse economy and aggressively marketing and selling the state to industries and businesses throughout the world.
- Balance environmental stewardship and economic growth. Every industry and business leave a carbon footprint – there needs to be realistic and consistent regulation and policy that allows us to grow our economy while protecting the environment.
- Streamline the permitting process and regulate all industries fairly and equitably.
- Incentivize people to stay or to come here. Home ownership programs, auto registration waivers, waive recreation activity fees.
- Market Pennsylvania to those in other states. Just like we market tourism, except we are inviting you to stay.

I wish I had all the answers. It's clearly a complex problem. I hope my remarks today may at least spark some discussion and the seed of an idea that can help us to resolve this dilemma.

Chairman Kail and members of the committee – Thank you.



PA Workforce Development Association

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Pennsylvania House Republican Policy Committee
How to better prepare our workforce to meet the needs of Pennsylvania employers
Cranberry Township Municipal Center
February 2, 2023

Testimony of Carrie Amann, Executive Director

Chairman Kail and Members of the Pennsylvania Republican House Policy Committee, thank you for inviting me to participate today. The Pennsylvania Workforce Development Association (PWDA) appreciates the opportunity to appear before the Committee today to share our thoughts on how we can improve our workforce development system and serve the workers and businesses of Pennsylvania.

Pennsylvania's local workforce development system is a statewide network of organizations that sit at the intersection of business and its current and future workforce. Bringing together resources, supports, information, and strategy, workforce development boards partner with employers to recruit and keep skilled talent, and support individuals to find and/or keep family-sustaining work.

"Where are the Workers?"

Is a common question employers often asking. Rightfully so – according to the Center for Workforce Information & Analysis, for every ten job openings in Pennsylvania there are approximately six available jobseekers. We frankly do not have enough supply of Pennsylvanians to fill this gap. The workforce development system provides local and regional strategy, labor market information, and resources to assist employers in overcoming the labor force shortage. From targeted recruitment and awareness activities to on-the-job training to apprenticeships to the development of its existing workforce, the local workforce development system aligns its activities to sustain competitive businesses and industries across the Commonwealth.

"Skilling Up Pennsylvania's Workforce"

Pennsylvania's local workforce development system centers on family-sustaining (re)employment. The workforce development system is not a stand-in for Pennsylvania's unemployment call centers. Over sixty PA CareerLink® locations across the Commonwealth serve thousands of unemployed workers, youth and young adults, veterans, existing workers, and jobseekers annually to have relevant in-demand skills and competencies and to be career-ready. Additionally, local workforce development boards build community networks to promote career opportunities, facilitate work experiences, and expand pathways so that individuals can access on-ramps to quality careers.

“Workforce Development is Economic Development”

Workforce development is crucial to the economic growth and prosperity of Pennsylvania. Our state's workforce is its most valuable asset, and investing in the skills and training of our workers is essential to attracting and retaining businesses, creating quality jobs, and improving the standard of living for all Pennsylvanians. As policymakers and legislators discuss transforming Pennsylvania practices to maximize business attraction and growth, it is critical to align economic development and workforce development – we cannot attract, retain, and grow businesses without strategizing on the workforce development needs of that business or industry.

The workforce development system in Pennsylvania is complex, as you have heard today. Dedicated professionals across the commonwealth seek to connect the various stakeholders and customers to ensure we have a workforce ready to meet our needs and lift up workers. Here at PWDA, we are a go-to resource to un-complicate workforce development in Pennsylvania. We strive to efficiently train, place, and help employers retain our workforce but we cannot do this alone.

#FreeTheData

Today, I want to focus on a relatively simple policy change that can make our system more responsive to the needs of Pennsylvania employers, workers, and jobseekers. Right now, state government releases workforce data with an extreme lag time. For example, data on workforce program performance released this winter might be 12-18 months old. This delay makes it difficult for our workforce partners to develop and deploy timely strategies that can best serve our customers.

We hope to pass legislation that will #FreetheData and make employment and workforce data available to local workforce agencies and stakeholders in real time. We can actively improve our workforce development efforts and ensure we are implementing policies that positively impact and respond to real-world conditions. By accessing existing data, local workforce development boards can more efficiently address gaps in the service delivery system. #FreeTheData also improves transparency and openness in government. We hope you consider this legislation in the upcoming session, and we would be happy to work with you and your staff.

Like all of our partners today, we are committed to working with businesses, educational institutions, community organizations, and government agencies to develop and implement programs that provide workers with the skills they need to succeed in the 21st-century economy.

We look forward to a continued partnership with you, our legislative leaders, so all Pennsylvanians can continue to benefit from a strong, resilient, and effective workforce development system.

Working together, we can create a more competitive and prosperous Pennsylvania.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before the Committee.