

President's workforce development plan deserves support | Alabama Daily News



By PERRY HOOPER

President Donald Trump recently signed an executive order to establish a new workforce initiative in the US. This initiative is complete with an advisory board aimed at improving educational opportunities for High School students who find themselves without a postsecondary plan following graduation. The workforce strategy will help protect the American industry by providing students an opportunity to learn the skill sets necessary for gainful employment once their high school career closes. Students can earn a high school diploma while also earning a professional certificate toward an available job.

Ivanka Trump, the President's senior advisor and forward-thinking daughter, recently said, *"...6.6 million US jobs are currently unfilled. Many of these jobs require skills training, but not a college degree. Yet for too long, both the public and private sectors have failed to develop innovative and effective training programs."*

The new workforce initiative is a win for America and also a win for the state of Alabama. In our state alone, there are industries like aerospace, aviation, agriculture, automotive manufacturing, maritime manufacturing, cyber security, internal technology, not to mention health sciences and construction possibilities to take advantage of. These industries need employees, and they have a desire to contribute economically sound practice to the state of Alabama in return. The Economic Development Association of Alabama is already branching community colleges toward career pathways. Thanks to President Trump, we now have an opportunity to serve our own high schools with the same successful solution.

Our state, as do most states, already has a set of Career and Technical Development standards by which to measure instruction, and Governor Kay Ivey and her administration are charged and ready to implement programs that would bring about success in the schools of Alabama. Students won't be tracked toward a technical field only—they will still earn a high school diploma, and they will still be held to the academic rigor our state standards require. They will simply earn an opportunity for workforce exposure as well as opportunities for internships and mentoring experiences from the local industries that contribute right back toward our Alabama communities. If students choose to forward their career by taking on college, a specific skill set certainly won't hinder this progress. It will only ensure we are not losing efforts on students who get stuck in between high school and a desired pathway after graduation.

In keeping of his promise to the American worker, President Donald Trump has provided us with an opportunity to succeed in this workforce development plan. Let's take a look within our state and local industries and join forces to unite our schools and local community industries. Alabama is rich in industry like the automobile manufacturing plants, IT, shipbuilding, defense, and manufacturing. Let's not allow an opportunity like this to pass us by. We need to take advantage of the American workforce industry policy, support our President's initiatives, and put real action toward making America and Alabama even greater.