



From the office of Texas Workforce Commission

Chairman Tom Pauken

Opinion/Editorial

For Immediate Release
Date: September 9, 2011

TWC Chairman Tom Pauken Statement In Response to President Obama's Address to Joint Session of Congress Sept. 9, 2011

President Obama's proposed jobs program is more of the same: a one-size-fits-all approach to a complex unemployment problem that varies from state to state. Reemployment programs already exist at the state level where they are operated by public servants on the frontlines who know their state's workforce needs. Instead of more new funding, let's give the states more flexibility to use funds in ways that support creative solutions at the local level.

One example of states tackling their own employment challenges is our own innovative *Texas Back to Work* program, which has proven successful in supporting the communities where these dollars are needed the most. In fact, *Texas Back to Work* was recognized just last year by this Administration's Department of Labor for its innovation in putting people back to work. Since the beginning of 2010, more than 18,000 out-of-work Texans have found new employment through the *Texas Back to Work* program, which offers businesses up to \$2,000 in incentives for hiring job-seekers who are receiving unemployment insurance benefits.

The results of how we have operated the program speak for themselves.

- More than 3,000 businesses have participated in the program.
- Sixty-three percent of job seekers have been placed successfully.
- Nearly 90 percent of those who completed the program remain employed in the following quarter.
- About two-thirds of those hired complete the four-month program, and for the remaining group, nearly 80 percent show wages and therefore a reconnection to the workforce in the following quarter.
- *Texas Back to Work* hires are making 99.4 percent of what they earned prior to losing their jobs.

Georgia Works works for Georgia. *STEPS* works for Mississippi. *Texas Back to Work* works for Texas. We don't need a bigger federal program to do what we are already doing well. We ask President Obama and the federal government to remove restrictions on federal funds that prohibit states from crafting their own unique solutions and to allow flexibility to operate our state's reemployment program in a way that best benefits Texas employers and job-seekers.

Tom Pauken is Chairman of the Texas Workforce Commission and author of Bringing America Home.

Media Contact: Lisa Givens (512) 463-8556

The Texas Workforce Commission is a state agency dedicated to helping Texas employers, workers and communities prosper economically. For details on TWC and the programs it offers in coordination with its network of local workforce development boards, call (512) 463-8556 or visit www.texasworkforce.org.

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