

Toyota Indiana Plant President Urges Workforce Training Solutions in Senate Testimony

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WASHINGTON, D.C. (September 22, 2021) – In testimony today before a Senate panel, Toyota Plant President Leah Curry stressed the auto industry’s need for more skilled talent and greater private sector participation in developing the nation’s workforce development system.

“My passion for workforce development is directly connected to my own experience as a young woman trying to find her way both academically and professionally,” said Curry, who is president of Toyota’s Princeton, Indiana assembly plant. Toyota’s workforce development programs are structured to overcome many of the challenges she faced as a young student.

Curry highlighted Toyota’s \$3.5 million investment since 2010 in 184 K-12 schools in Indiana and across the country to implement “Project Lead the Way” programs that give students more STEM education and career pathways. She noted the partnership with local schools called the 4T Academy, which is designed to connect upper-level high school students with career opportunities in advanced manufacturing.

“I want to emphasize the importance of considering workforce development policies in conjunction with education policies,” said Curry. “If education policies are not flexible enough to allow students to explore various pathways, students may ultimately bypass even the best workforce development opportunities.”

She urged members of the Senate Subcommittee on Employment and Workforce Safety to reauthorize the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act to allow more private sector involvement in workforce system.

Toyota initially established the highly successful advance manufacturing technician (AMT) program with community colleges in Toyota plant states. Students in the program attend school two days a week and learn on the job site three days a week.

The program has grown significantly to the point where now about 400 employers pool talent from 32 chapters in 12 states in what is known collectively as the Federation of Advanced Manufacturing Education or FAME USA. More than 1,300 students have graduated from the program since 2010, with over 500 graduating since 2020 despite the challenges presented by the global pandemic.

The Subcommittee hearing began at 10 am (ET) and can be viewed [here](#).