“Building Skills for National Security and Competitiveness: Best Practice from Indiana”

Introductory and Welcoming Remarks

DATE
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FEATURING
Todd Young
U.S. Senator (R-IN)

CSIS EXPERTS
Sujai Shivakumar
Director and Senior Fellow of the Renewing American Innovation Project, CSIS

Transcript By
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Welcome to CSIS and today’s webinar on Building Skills for National Security and Competitiveness: Best Practice from Indiana. I’m Sujai Shivakumar, senior fellow at the Center for Strategic and International Studies here in Washington, D.C. And we are cooperating with the Indiana University Public Policy Institute in today’s program.

I thought I would set, you know, the global context for today’s meeting – for today’s webinar. I think there is what we see in – a new urgency in what is an uncertain world. Over the past few decades, we’ve basically enjoyed a relatively stable international order, China’s rise was welcomed, and we saw the rapid globalization of innovation, manufacturing, and the chain – the value chains. And today that game has changed. We have much more geopolitical uncertainty. China is now a strategic adversary and innovation peer. And we are in the process of rewiring our innovation systems and value chains in the wake of the pandemic and also in – as the war in Ukraine is affecting energy flows as well as food flows around the world.

So how can we prepare the United States to win the next three decades? So this sort of brings us to the new program here at CSIS, which is called renewing American innovation. So the – we basically look at the American innovation system as a strategic asset in itself. So this system supports research, technology development, and the commercialization of new technologies, and underpins our nation’s economic growth, competitiveness and security. Today this infrastructure is in need of renewed policy attention. It’s been suffering from decades of inadequate public investment, the degradation of our manufacturing systems, and inadequate investments in training and education of our workforce.

In the meantime, other countries and regions have made determined investments to operate their innovation systems. And so renewing American innovation is today a strategic priority. So what are the key challenges here? So how do we ensure our nation’s continued role as a leading innovator? How do we grow a shared stake in the prosperity? And how can this prosperity be rooted in an inclusive participation in our innovation economy? So here, inclusive, I think I just want to stress, means bringing together both demographic as well as geographic diversity to the knowledge economy of the 21st century. This means, again, connecting our communities into the broader innovation ecosystem so that we can help create a shared stake in our common prosperity.

This sort of brings us to the topic of today’s webinar, which is how is Indiana meeting these challenges? And we’re focusing on, you know, the – our attention on growing the 21st century biomedical workforce in Indiana. So we have two panels today. The first panel is focusing on growing the workforce training networks. This is looking at the role of entrepreneurs,
community actors, industry, and state government. And this panel is moderated by Samee Desai, who is the director of the Manufacturing Policy Initiative and associate director of the Institute for Development Studies at Indiana University. This will be followed by a second panel, which will be a policy roundtable on growing the regional skills infrastructure. And this will be moderated by Tom Guevara, who is a director of the Indiana University Public Policy Institute.

But before we get started, I wanted to introduce Senator Todd Young, who has very graciously taped some welcoming remarks for this webinar. So as you know, Senator Todd Young represents the state of Indiana. He currently serves on the United States Senate Committees on Finance, Foreign Relations, and Commerce, Science and Transportation, as well as the Small Business and Entrepreneurship Committee. Previously when he was at the House of Representatives he served on the House Armed Services Committee, the House Budget Committee, and most recently the House Ways and Means Committee. So I think we understand that, you know, Senator Young gets why building workforce skills in Indiana is essential for our national security, for our national competitiveness. And so without further ado, if we can – we can move onto the welcome video of Senator Young. Thank you very much.

Senator Todd Young (R-In):

Hello. I’m Senator Todd Young. I’m sorry I couldn’t be with you in person.

As a U.S. Senator for Indiana, I’m proud to represent a state that is working to better support entrepreneurs, foster innovative thinking, and address workforce challenges. I’m grateful for Indiana-based firms like Eli Lilly and Cook Medical that are stepping up as national leaders in addressing the skills gap facing our state and our nation. During my time in the Senate, I’ve worked with my colleagues on legislation that encourages and supports U.S. innovation.

My bill, the United States Innovation and Competition Act, that is now entering a rare conference committee, this critical legislation would invest in key emerging technologies, STEM education, workforce training, and ultimately increase our global competitiveness. My bill will encourage entrepreneurship, innovation, and boost technological advancements here in Indiana. Innovative thinking is crucial to addressing many of the challenges facing our nation. That’s why the work CSIS is doing to renew American innovation and address workforce challenges is so critical.

Thank you to the CSIS Renewing American Innovation Project and the Indiana University Public Policy Institute for hosting this very important conversation. I’m encouraged by the innovative work your organizations are doing every day to help Hoosiers. Thank you.