In the Matter of: )
DISTRIBUTIONAL EFFECTS: )
DISABILITY, AGE, AND )
EDUCATION ROUNDTABLE )

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THE UNITED STATES INTERNATIONAL TRADE COMMISSION

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Tuesday,
March 22, 2022
Teleconference
U.S. International
Trade Commission
500 E Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C.

The roundtable commenced, pursuant to notice, at 1:00 p.m., before the United States International Trade Commission.

PARTICIPANTS:

USITC:

COMMISSIONER AMY A. KARPEL, Moderator
VICE CHAIR RANDOLPH J. STAYIN
COMMISSIONER DAVID S. JOHANSON

WILLIAM R. BISHOP, Supervisory Hearings and Information Officer
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External:

DEB ACKERMAN, Alliance for American Manufacturing
WILLIAM ATTIG, Union Veterans Council
DAN BOONE, USW (retired)
LINDSAY BARAN, National Council on Independent Living
HASAN ENAYATI, Yang-Tan Institute, Cornell
BILL ERICKSON, Yang-Tan Institute, Cornell
JANET HILL, Steelworker

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BRIAN HORN, Disability:IN
PETER KALDES, American Society on Aging
NANCY LEAMOND, AARP
ROBERT MORRISON, machinist (retired)
MIKE NOLL, USW Local 1237
DAHLIA SHAEWITZ, Institute for Educational Leadership
BONNIELIN SWENOR, Johns Hopkins Disability Health Research Center
DAMON TERZAGHI, Advancing States
EDWIN WALKER, Administration on Aging, HHS
COMMISSIONER KARPEL: Well, good afternoon, everyone. My name is Amy Karpel, and I'm one of five Commissioners at the United States International Trade Commission. I'm excited to welcome you to our fifth roundtable to study the distributional effects of trade and trade policy on U.S. workers.

Today's roundtable will give us the opportunity to discuss the impacts of trade on workers with disabilities and on workers of differing ages and education level. I'll be the moderator for today's roundtable. The agency's Vice Chair, Randy Stayin, and Commissioners David Johanson and Rhonda Schmidtlein are actively listening and may ask some questions toward the end of our discussion.

Commission staff members David Coffin, Simon Athome (phonetic), Tamara Khachaturian, and Jennifer Powell organized this roundtable, and I want to thank them and the rest of the team for their great work. Before we get started, I thought I would tell you a little bit about the Commission and the context of this roundtable.

The U.S. International Trade Commission is an
independent agency. We're not part of the Biden/Harris Administration or Congress. We assist the Administration and Congress when requested. We provide them with independent information and analysis through various means, such as the study. In addition, we have other responsibilities, such as deciding import injury and unfair trade cases for U.S. industries. Our job is to be independent and objective in everything we do.

Today's event is one of seven roundtables that is part of a study to collect input on the potentially different effects of trade on U.S. workers. This study was requested by the United States Trade Representative, Katherine Tai, a member of the President's cabinet responsible for U.S. trade policy.

During a recent event, USTR Tai referred to these roundtables and the related work the Commission is doing on the distributional effects of trade as providing a "roadmap" of how to make trade policy more targeted and effective.

Each roundtable will focus on a different category, including skill, wage, and salary level, race and ethnicity, gender and orientation, and age, disability, and education, especially as they effect under-represented and under-served
At the conclusion of all of the roundtables, the Commission will submit a written report summarizing the information gathered. This report will be delivered in October of this year and it will be publicly available.

We have a diverse group of participants for today's roundtable. We have people who have worked on factory floors, union leaders, academics, researchers, advocates, and a public servant. My role today is to ask questions and manage the flow of discussion so that everyone has a chance to speak.

Your role as participants is to share experiences, opinions, and information. We want this to be a wide-ranging conversation, so you may hear something that you don't agree with. Just remember that there are no right or wrong answers. We value all perspectives. We want your candid thoughts.

So, before we get started, I have a few housekeeping items. Our discussion today is scheduled to last for two hours, with a short break after the first hour. Having said that, we may continue our discussion past 3 p.m. to ensure that everyone has an opportunity to be heard. Of
course, we realize that not everyone may be able to stay past 1
3, so please do not feel obligated to do so.

Please be conscious of the fact that this is open
to the public and the press. Also, the discussion today is
being transcribed for the record, and a link to that
transcript will be included in the final report to USTR.
Therefore, you should be careful not to share any information
that you or any organization with which you are affiliated
may be viewed as confidential.

If you would like to respond to a question, please
use the WebEx Raise Hand feature and I will recognize you.
If that doesn't work for some reason or if you've done that
and I don't see it for some reason, just wave your real hand
and get my attention.

If you are participating by phone, you may jump in
when you sense there is a pause, or you can email us at
d@usitc.gov and the team will notify me that you would like
to speak. Please remember that only registered participants
will be invited to speak during today's discussion. If
you're here today as a member of the public observing and you
would like to provide some input, you may email us after the
event at d@usitc.gov.
Whenever you make a comment, we ask that you state your name so it's clear to everyone who is speaking. And if there's an organization with which you are affiliated that you would like to identify, please also state the name of the organization.

Once again, thank you all for being here today. I'm looking forward to our discussion.

The goal of today's roundtable is to gain a better understanding of workers' experience and how that differs through experiences of other workers based on age, education level, or whether they have a disability or accessibility requirement and why. These roundtables are specifically focused on the impacts from trade, so let's break that down a bit.

A trade impact, for example, could be increased competition with imports that causes a U.S. company to lay off workers or reduce wages, or it could be new opportunities to export, causing a business to grow and hire more workers, or it could be a decision to offshore a business or for a foreign business to invest in a factory in the United States, or it could be another effect.

The key for today's discussion is to understand how
and why impacts brought about by trade, what some have called trade shocks, affect workers differently based on their age, education level, or disability. It is less important for today's discussion that you can identify a particular experience as attributable to trade. Experiences about how and why any type of change or economic shock affects different types of workers differently are welcome and provide valuable insights for the study.

I'm going to group my questions into two or three buckets. First, I would like to ask about the type of challenges workers are experiencing in the workforce related to age or education level or whether they have a disability or accessibility requirements and explore how those experiences differ from other workers; second, I'd like to ask about how trade has impacted workers differently based on age or education level or disability; and third, about policies or programs that can help workers deal with the adverse impacts of trade or to take advantage of trade opportunities, particularly for aging workers, workers without a college or high school degree, and workers with disabilities or accessibility requirements.

Today's experience is like our past roundtables.
These three topics may bleed together, and that's fine. My intention is not to be too rigid about the structure of our conversation.

I also want to recognize that the challenges a worker experiences based on age, education level, or disability may differ, but in an effort to keep everyone engaged, I'm not going to separate the conversation into different segments, and I invite participants to share their experiences and perspectives with respect to age, education level, or disability in response to any of the questions. So let's get started.

Before getting into other questions, I thought I might start out by getting a sense of what drew you here today to this roundtable. Are there a few participants who would like to share?

MR. BOONE: I would. I would like to thank you and the Commissioners for the opportunity to participate in this. Over the 50 years that I've worked in the steel mill, we have been negatively impacted by trade many, many times, so I'm honored to be here today, and, hopefully, I can give you some insight from my side of how we've been impacted. So I'm honored to be here. Thank you.
COMMISSIONER KARPEL: Thank you.

Ms. Hill.

MS. HILL: I wanted to thank you as well, and I also was drawn to this because I've seen some of our -- I work for the United Steelworkers. I'm also a secretary for the -- at the international, and I'm also a corresponding secretary for the Coalition of Labor Union Women, and I've seen folks -- and it has a huge impact on them and their community and I just welcome the opportunity, especially since, you know, even in some of our facilities, disability is definitely an issue because it's hard physical work. So thank you very much for the opportunity to speak on this.

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: Thank you.

Ms. Hodge.

MS. HODGE: Good afternoon. I'm Isabel Hodge from the U.S. International Council on Disabilities. I think I was really drawn to this conversation today because, you know, there's one billion people in the world with disabilities and there are some U.S. disability organizations that are focusing on, you know, business and trade and exports and imports and, you know, how that impacts the disability community. But I'm more interested on the impact
of the U.S. not ratifying the UN Convention on the Rights for
Persons with Disabilities and how that impacts U.S.
businesses that have a global presence and some of the lost
import -- or U.S. export opportunities there. So I'll
probably talk about it a little bit more later, but I'm
really hoping that we can talk about the convention a little
bit today.

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: Thank you.

Mr. Attig.

MR. ATTIG: Thank you so much. My name is Will
Attig. I'm the Executive Director of the Union Veterans
Council of the AFL-CIO. We represent over a million working
veterans throughout the country. And I am really here not
because I'm an expert on trade and trade policy, but I'm an
expert on the veterans community and especially our specific
topic that the Union Veterans Council focuses on the most,
the socioeconomic effects that our economy and our country
has on the men and women who served our country, whether it
was for two years during Vietnam or for 20 years during the
global war on terror. And we see a dramatic coalition
between financial stability and the effects that are at issue
with our veterans community that we see every single day and
we hear talked about a lot.

And with the veterans community, we're a very unique and small group where we have large numbers in very consolidated pockets that we can take a good look at, and we're really focused on the younger veterans, their pathways into stable jobs throughout the country that gives them that pathway to the American dream, but then also retirement and security in our veterans community and the effects of what trade deals in the past have done to affect that group of veterans that right now should be living out their lives but now find themselves struggling because of the effects of these past trade deals.

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: Thanks for those who have shared.

I did want to make one announcement. For participants that prefer to communicate in written form via chat, you can either use the chat feature to alert Bill or you can email the team at de@usitc.gov and your question or your comment will be read out loud. Thank you.

All right. So I appreciate those introductory remarks about what drew you here. I thought that would be a nice way to open and sort of set the scene. So I welcome
others if they're inspired later on to respond to that first question, you may do so.

But, in the meantime, I will move on to our sort of first roundtable official question and ask, what challenges do aging workers, workers with a disability, or workers without a college or a high school degree experience with respect to finding or maintaining employment or earning a living wage? What factors may be at play that make that experience different than for other workers?

MR. NOLL: Hello.

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: Yeah, please go ahead, Mr. Noll.

MR. NOLL: My name is Mike. I am President of the USW Local in Newark, Ohio. I feel that there's a lot of issues around especially older people getting jobs simply because, you know, we've lost so many jobs. Our labor force is -- I mean, it's hugely expanded and a lot of the jobs that we lost, you know, over the years, those are the people that -- you know, the older people had those jobs. Now they're gone. They're trying to get in somewhere else and when you go -- you know, an employer is going to look at you and look at the long road and see, like, okay, well, we can
have this guy that's 20 years old for 30 years or we can have
this guy that's 60 years old and he's going to be gone in no
time, and it just hurts the older generation. They're not
able to get the jobs that the young people perform, and the
fact that we lost all those jobs, I mean, it just puts them
in a situation where they're kind of behind the eight ball.

And as far as, you know, like, having a high school
diploma and stuff, coming into a factory job, I would -- I
think that it would be beneficial if -- a lot of factories
only require a high school diploma if need be. I think it
would be hugely beneficial to everyone involved if a company
would hire someone without diploma or GED with an agreement
that they would go through the process to get it and, you
know, the company could even help them do that. I think that
would be hugely beneficial to getting people on board and,
you know, for people to work. That's it.

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: Thank you, Mr. Noll.

Let me check who was next here. Ms. Hodge.

MS. HODGE: Hi again. I would say that, you know, the Affordable Care Act, you know, and other legislation
is -- you know, while we have that, that has created -- you
know, there's still significant gaps in the programs and
services that assist workers with chronic conditions and disabilities, who, you know, they want to continue working when their chronic conditions progress and their functional limitations increase. However, you know, these gaps still exist, and I would say one of the big gaps is access to long-term support services, such as personal assistant services in the workplace. No commercial healthcare insurance provides access to personal assistant services in the workplace.

So think about this. You've got these children that benefitted from the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act and, you know, inclusive education. They have this fantastic high school diploma. They've gone on to college, but they have a significant disability that requires assistance with toileting and feeding in the workplace, and when they enter the workplace, they lose all of the Medicaid waiver and all of the benefits they were getting from the government that provides those services because they're not provided in the workplace.

So, you know, that's a significant gap. We have a whole lot of American young people with college degrees that can't access the workplace because that's not in place. It
should be, you know, covered services, healthcare services.

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: Thank you for sharing that.

Ms. Hill.

MS. HILL: I'd just like to say for workers with disabilities it is often very difficult. I've worked with some of these folks, and it's often difficult to get employers to make even small accommodations. Some of them are very reluctant to make any kind of an accommodation. I'm not sure why, even though, you know, under EEOC guidelines, they need to, but all I can say is they make mole hills into mountains because they frequently claim that it would be extremely expensive to accommodate workers for something as simple as a shift change.

And sometimes it's even they even have a job open and they have where they could, you know, get the worker on that shift and they're reluctant to do so and I'm not really, you know, sure why. Sometimes they have to be forced to do so. Sometimes you see workers that are reluctant to pursue EEOC cases. I'm just saying from a perspective, it is -- you know, sometimes it's just like they were going -- I can tell you of one case where they were going to actually fire an employee because he was unable to use one of his arms, and
they had to get a new fork truck and they did not want -- and
they were going to get one with a joystick. Without even
testing it out for him, they were just going to get rid of
him.

And we were able to intervene and he was actually
able to use the fork truck with a joystick much easier than
he could the one with the wheel, and, actually, -- as a
result of our intervening, we actually got them a discount on
the fork truck for what they were going to get. And, yeah,
it was just -- it's really disappoint -- I don't know how we
put out there to employers that people really need to work
and they should be accommodating rather than trying to block
them.

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: Thank you.

Ms. Ackerman.

MS. ACKERMAN: Yes. I work at -- used to work at
Rubbermaid in Wooster, Ohio, which is a plastic -- rubber and
plastic manufacturing facility. I started working there when
I was in my 20s and figured that was the place. Back in the
day, you would go to a factory and you would stay in a
factory until you retired. I did have a little bit of
college before I went there, but at the time, people were
having more luck getting good pay in factory jobs and having
a rough time finding the jobs that they went to college for.
I was a single parent the majority of the time I was at the
factory, and since it was a good-paying job, I had insurance,
was able to raise my kids, give them all the sports equipment
and everything they needed and have insurance.

Unfortunately, we were bought out by a company that
wanted our name more than anything else, and the place closed
down when there were a lot of us in our late middle ages. I
was, like, 45 or something, and, like Michael said, people
look at your age. So here I was with 28 years. Actually,
really more than that because I was married briefly to
someone that was in the service and had a break in my
seniority. But it's hard to find a job then.

We found our place. We were able to bid on jobs
that worked for us. We were in a place that did help people
with disabilities and stuff, but now here we have a whole
mess of people in our town that are looking for jobs and
they're in their middle ages or very close to retirement.

Some of the people were able to stick it out.
Since I wasn't close to retirement, I knew I needed to find a
job because this -- Newell was who bought us -- was going to
eventually close us down because that's their history, and we were the only union shop.

So we had people that were my age or a little bit older that ended up instead of having one good-paying job luckily -- I mean, I'm so thankful my kids were grown and so I was through -- you know, made it through that and everything. But now we had people that they had kids that couldn't find jobs and they had kids that were living still with them, and it was just an absolute mess.

Some of our folks had to work three jobs just to be able to keep the things that they were still paying on or the homes they had and the different things they still had. And people -- sometimes I think some of the benefits that we could have had at work -- now I was always -- I felt like I made good money and I definitely had good insurance, but I was always just that wee little bit above what I needed to be able to have help with childcare. So, at that time, it might make a difference of if I just made $20 less I could pay $140 less for childcare, which is way different now. So I never thought about people with disability that would be having those same type of issues.

But you'd asked earlier why we got on this call.
Right now, I'm working with a public policy group that advocates for American manufacturing. And I listened to one of the earlier roundtables, and someone asked one of the workers out of a steel mill -- asked if ever in negotiations the company threatened them by actually saying, if you don't accept this contract, these wages, we're going to move your job out of the country, we're going to go ahead and ship it overseas. I was not a participant, so I wasn't allowed to say anything, but it infuriated me because they don't have to say anything at the table to make us feel like we don't have a choice.

Where I work, they had already brought in two tiers lower paying, which created havoc within the shop. They also had already taken one of our departments and sent it to Mexico. You always, always have the threat that they're going to take your job to another country. I don't care what they say at the table. It is always hanging over your head.

Now we have Rubbermaid -- of course, my plant closed. It was the original plant. Now we have Rubbermaid proudly made in China. One of the deals is the big box companies. I mean, that's what they say. I'm not proud they're made in China, but China puts that on their label,
proudly made in China.

One of the big box companies, that was really the beginning of our downfall, and I'm sure all of you would know what that big box company is. They told you, you can't have -- we're not going to sell to you if you can't meet this price. So, of course, they're going to go to someplace where they can get the product cheaper, and that product was already because of the trade policies we had created before that time. Now they were going to China or wherever. You know, they were coming from someplace else.

So even though -- so we were competing with them just because of trying to keep our customers, and eventually we lost. And this all goes back to trade. If it wasn't for the trade, they would have never had that option. And then, once the factories closed down in town, everybody that said "I will never, never, never shop at that place" now has no option because they can't afford to shop anyplace but that place. And then all the places in town that were the local stores and the local businesses, they're all closed because nobody can keep -- nobody -- it just is devastating. It's just devastating.

Okay. Sorry, I forgot the --
COMMISSIONER KARPEL: That's all right. Thank you for sharing, Ms. Ackerman.

MS. ACKERMAN: I'm sorry.

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: I would want to clarify. I think -- I'm sorry you were upset about the previous roundtable question. I think the spirit of it was certainly to see if employers had been trying to leverage --

MS. ACKERMAN: Oh, no.

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: -- the use of the factories. I don't think it was meant to say that it doesn't happen unless it's explicit, so --

MS. ACKERMAN: No. I -- no, I -- nothing to do -- nothing about that.

Also on that call someone said, oh, we've created so many jobs, we've got so many jobs now in Florida because of trade because all these imports are come -- all this stuff's coming in and we have all these people. And I just wanted to say, yeah, how many of those people -- how much are you paying those people? Can those people live on the job -- on the money you're paying them? Do they have to have more than one job? Do they have insurance? You know, are they going to still have that job in eight years? You know,
it's --

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: Thank you. Those are important questions, so I'm hoping we'll get people during our table today to talk about all that.

MR. MORRISON: This is Robert --

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: Okay.

MR. MORRISON: This is Robert Morrison. Can I jump in for a minute?

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: Sure.

MR. MORRISON: Okay. My name is Robert Morrison. I'm a retired machinist now, but I was a machinist for over 31 years here in Burlington, Ohio, an IAM shop, International Association of Machinists. We were bought by a big foreign German company. I'm not going to mention their name, but it rhymes with Siemens, and then they owned us for four years. They shut us down. They offshored our jobs to the Czech Republic and Varadotto (phonetic), India, and a non-union plant in North Carolina. We were owned by Dresser-Rand. Siemens bought Dresser-Rand out and in the process they've shut down eight Dresser-Rand facilities, seven of which were union-represented facilities. And it was just -- it was terrible. Our plant was always profitable, innovative, and
productive. We were one of their lowest cost plants to
operate. In fact, after they closed us down we still had a
handful of people working here in sales and design and stuff.
And the lady that announced our closure came back to
Burlington, Iowa, and said, "We realize now we made a mistake
by closing this factory," but they didn't open it back up.

Also here in Burlington, we've recently lost our
former GE plant, which was bought out by ABB. They closed
and they moved to North Carolina. So we've lost probably 500
jobs in the Burlington area since 2019, good-paying jobs.

And like I said, I was forced into early retirement
at 64. I broke my leg at work on June 29, 1994, shattered my
right tibia. So I had a 50 percent impairment in my right
leg, 23 percent body as a whole, and I knew when they shut us
down at 64 that nobody would hire me. So, I was forced into
early retirement, tightened my belt up a couple notches, and
I'm keeping a roof over my head, and the lights on, but
there's not much left at the end of the month.

This factory closure affected people so badly. One
of my friends, I worked across the aisle from him for ten
years, he committed suicide over it.

You know, we think companies don't give a damn
about American workers; it's all about their profit, and then when they realize they realize they cut the goose that laid the golden egg, you know, they tell us, oh, we realize now we made a mistake. Well, that doesn't bring the jobs back, it doesn't bring my deceased friend back.

And, so I'm very pissed off at this German company, and what they did, and especially closing these other union represented factories around the country. So, thank you for letting me speak.

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: Yes, thank for sharing that. I'm very sorry about the loss of your friend.

MR. MORRISON: Yeah, he was a good guy. He made them a lot of money too, a good machinist.

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: Sorry. Mr. Boone.

MR. BOONE: Thank you. You know, I've worked in the same location for 50 years for six different companies, and LTV was -- I worked for Republic Steel, then it was LTV, and in 2001 we were in the throes of massive imports, you know, legally dumped foreign steel, you know, steelworkers had Stand Up For Steel, and LTV filed bankruptcy.

They vacated the healthcare for over 30,000 retirees that was processed throughout their whole company.
They vacated the pensions as well, which went to the PVGC.

And we had opportunities. We took advantage of the programs TAA, TRA, TIA, we took advantage of all of that, and to reflect what my brother from southern Ohio said, the union president of USW Forever report, that age was a factor. You know, guys who were 65, you know, 58, 60 years old, and they go through training, and they try to get a different skill, they're not technologically adept, and they struggled.

They went through jobs. And there's 50 people that would apply for a maintenance job in the city, you know, and because I was union president involved with the union, so, I knew a lot of them. And these employers would actually bid down, and the guy would say, well, we can pay you $12 an hour, and he says I'll take it. Somebody else he knows and goes, right, and applies for the same job, we can pay you $11. So, they were pitting each other against the wages to drive the wages down knowing all these people needed jobs.

And, so, you know, the age was a factor. If you work at a steel mill for 40 years, you break yourself, you break your body, and, so, even though they don't carry the definition of disabled, or have a disability, they are disabled. Their backs are gone, their legs are gone, their
hips are shot, hands don't work anymore.

So, they go out and try to get a job, and as my brother -- union brother said, there's -- they're not going to hire you.

And as we go forward, you know, and I know we'll talk about trade later, but, you know, the steelworkers always believed in fair trade, not free trade, fair trade. And we believe if trade was fair, we can compete with anybody.

And when you have countries like China, as they were ridiculously out of control in subsidizing, dumped all this steel, we took out 100,000 petitions to Washington, D.C. to get LTV to take, I think, it was money from the Bird Bill, I think it was, you know, half a -- $500 million you'd get for the Bird Bill.

Well, LTV said no thanks, and they vacated it, and they devastated lives, you know, retirees struggling, their pensions to the PVGC they only paid a maximum by age, people's pensions were cut in half, and they struggled, and a lot of them are still struggling.

But, you know, it's been a crazy ride. Again, I've worked for six companies in the same location, and I now work
for Cleveland Cliffs, it's an American company, and they
appear to be very good with the union, which we are grateful
for because when we were Middle (phonetic), and Archer Middle
(phonetic), Archer Middle was ruthless, and they did tell us,
you know, we'll shut you down, we'll move your plant.

And it's been a crazy ride, it's been a crazy ride,
and I'm grateful we have a lot of people that survived it,
but we had suicides as well, and a lot of depression. So, it
was rough on all of us, and I can certainly relate to most
the topics we're going to discuss here today. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: Mr. Kaldes.

MR. KALDES: Thank you, Commissioner Karpel. My
name is Peter Kaldes. I'm the CEO of the American Society on
Aging, and we are a professional membership society that
represents professionals who are in the field of aging. Many
of them are on this call, as well as are working in local
communities.

And I comment the ITC for actually looking at trade
policy through the aging lens, as well as all the other
lenses that you're applying. It's important because, as you
heard, so many folks are dealing with what we refer to, and
folks in the field of aging, is ageism, and age
discrimination in the workplace.

You know, for the economists on the call, in theory discrimination is a market inefficiency, right, that it should actually hurt employers, and in theory older workers' wages should actually reflect the economic value of the work that they create.

But you heard today already how employers basically set wages below the value of the work an older worker has created, and then you combine that with ageist stereotypes around productivity and skills, and the end result is what you've heard, which are wages are lower, and are negatively impacted by these actions.

Now, I think it's useful to understand how age discrimination is tied to wages, but also the labor participation rates. Older workers are increasingly working more out of not just blunt, but out of need, as you heard today, yet job discrimination, especially in hiring and firing, can have a devastating impact on all older workers.

There's a ton of research out there on this particular point. I know our friends at AARP have some really thoughtful analysis on this Urbanist too (phonetic), others have demonstrated something like 56 percent of U.S.
workers over the age of 50 reported losing full-time, long-held positions before they were even ready to retire, and only one in ten of these workers were experienced, have a significant drop in earnings, and they can never earn as much ever again, and we've heard that here today.

So, again, I just -- I thank the Commission for hosting this, and looking at trade policy, specifically which we'll talk about a little later, through the lens of aging.

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: Thank you. Mr. Attig.

MR. ATTIG: Thank you so much. And I'm now going to echo Peter with just thanking you again for having this frame when it comes to something as technical as trade.

I try every single day to tell people that the issues are veteran issues, and, I think, each person on this call already represented to you it has to do that. I have to fight that wages are a veterans issue, that trade is a veterans issue because it affects each one of us so much.

And there's just communities that are diverse, communities make up folks from both a wide range of ages, but we're also one of the most diverse groups. We have a high rate of disability, but we also have large numbers of minorities, and an ever-growing population, much more looking
like America than it did a long time.

And when you think about how some of these policies affect us, especially when it comes to the age aspect of it, we saw after World War II an economy and policies that worked for the American worker. We saw veterans coming back from war to being able to create jobs, work in factories, create that American dream we all talked about.

There's a different story for the Vietnam veterans when they came home from Vietnam where when Vietnam veterans came home many of them did find jobs, they did find work, and throughout that process they were succeeding, but then in the mid 80's, mid to the late 80's, the mid 90's, we saw a massive drop-off in employment.

We also saw a dramatic increase in suicide in working age ages of veterans, and this goes right back to the stories that we've heard already about this thing.

I'm sorry to bring this up, this is a critical part of our veterans community, is veterans suicide. We saw that increase in the younger veterans community, or in the working class, 40 -- 35 to 50-year olds between the 80's and the 90's.

Why was that? Well, we saw a massive loss of jobs
in our veterans community, so people who worked for the steel
mills, coal-fired-powered coal mines, manufacturing jobs, we
saw a massive drop-off.

When my generation of veterans came home, for the
largest group of us we came home between 2005-2012, the
largest group of folks who fought during Iraq and
Afghanistan, and then we saw a massive shift. We saw younger
people facing the highest rates of veteran suicide. We saw
the youngest veterans facing the highest rates of
unemployment and under-employment.

And when you look at what the common denominator is
between all of this it's trade policy. When we started to
create policies that worked against working class people, it
put veterans, disabled people, and people without a -- just a
high school education in the cross-hairs.

Our veterans community has a higher level of
under-education when it comes to lack of college. We see
that today where our veterans -- the wages when it comes to,
you know, non-union veterans that have a high school
education that worked in these plants.

I was part of an event a few years ago in Chicago
where a company that makes Oreo cookies laid off a large
number of workers, and it was unexpected, just like Jeff
talked about. They didn't warn anybody, they went to a
contract negotiation, the equipment to go to Chicago to build
a new plant was on the way, and they diverted to Mexico.

Thirty percent of those workers were minority
veterans from inner city Chicago. They were working a job
that allowed them to take care of their families, and because
of the trade policies that allowed that company to move those
jobs to Mexico where the price of Oreo cookies has not gone
up, I can guarantee you that, and not gone down that's for
sure. It's gone up over time, but it's not gone down since
this move happened. But they went from paying their workers
$30 an hour with some benefits that gave these folks a chance
at just living a good life to giving workers in South
American and Mexico, I think, it was less than $4 an hour to
do the same job.

There is no way we can compete. And the people who
bear the brunt of it are the American workers, the disabled
workers, and the workers that need those jobs to let them
survive.

Again, I'm sorry, I'm going to shut up, but I've
talked too much, but it really means a lot to us, and we've
got to figure out a way to give these opportunities back to
this young generation of Americans, this young generation of
Americans whether it's the millennials, or below. We do not
have the opportunities to succeed in this economy right now,
and trade policy is going to shape that for the years to
come.

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: Let me just ask a follow-up,
Mr. Attig. In terms of the sort of challenges that veterans
face, you mentioned some of the younger veterans facing
challenges because of maybe lack of a college education
because they were serving during the time when maybe their
counterparts would have been doing that.

I think you also mentioned disabilities as well.
Are there other aspects that you think are challenging their
ability to sort of participate in the work force in an equal
sort of fashion as other workers?

MR. ATTIG: I think generally, and I'm going to
make sure I take a step back and say that on general when you
look at overall numbers, veterans do better in the economy
than non-veteran counterparts. Over such a small population
the ones that do bad do very bad. There's only ten percent
of all veterans that earn over $100,000 a year when you think
about that overall.

The lack of job creation in areas that our veterans live and go home to is critical to this aspect. When you think about veterans that live in communities like where I came home to southern Illinois, I thought the worst fight I was ever going to fight were the streets of Ramadi (phonetic) during the surge.

And that sounds like a talking point, but I really mean this, is that when I came home after the Great Recession into a community that's already been devastated by years of jobs being -- you know, manufacturing jobs, mining jobs, in a small community in southern Illinois, you know, I came home to a recession where I really faced a struggle. I faced a struggle not having an education. I faced a struggle of a job market being saturated.

Just, again, we were talking about the disabled folks, the job market was saturated with folks with high degrees, and my little, you know, veterans DV-214 couldn't tell me, tell folks how to get a job.

That increased unemployment to 19 percent in my age group at that time during the recession when veterans were coming home, and it was mainly in areas that had seen massive
job loss during the recession, and then also during
the -- you know, the manufacturing draw down beforehand.
It's across the board across the country.

And then the other big aspect is retirement
insecurity in our veterans community because it's Vietnam
veterans right now that are retiring that have had to work
multiple different jobs, and constantly lose the value of the
dollar, the value of that hour of labor it gave throughout
the last 50 years that led them to a point where now they're
finding themselves trying to retire, you know, and really
finding themselves without -- again, in desperation. But, I
think, there's a lot of people who are in the retirement
community that can talk about that better than me.

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: Thank you very much. I
appreciate that. Ms. Swenor.

MS. SWENOR: Yes. I am Bonnielin Swenor. I am
Director of the Johns Hopkins Disability Health Research
Center. I'm just very happy to be here.

I am a person with a disability, and my work
focuses on addressing inequities for people with
disabilities. I am not an expert in trade policy. I am an
expert in data, and doing research centered on communities
that are most impacted.

I, along those lines, am grateful, and learning a lot from this conversation, and just, again, really grateful for this discussion.

I'll also share that my background and training is also in aging research, so I span a few sides of this conversation.

I'll echo what was just said, quite honestly, for the disability community we are a diverse population. We are the largest minority group in the United States, 67 million adults have a disability, and as a data scientist, I know that's an under-estimate. That's about one in four American adults, and that spans older adults, younger adults, veterans, people in and out of the work force. But we are differentially impacted by trade policy.

What I'm hearing in this conversation really is circling on issues of power, choice, and opportunity, and, I think, that's really said in all this -- to this conversation of people with disabilities in the work force.

The unemployment rate for people with disabilities is more than twice that for people without a disability, and part of the reason -- well, there's many reasons, but part of
the reason is because we don't know what to do about it, quite frankly, and that's been echoed in some of these conversations in prior statements.

We don't have a good play book of best practices. We don't have data to address how to change this issue qualitative and quantitative, and we are living in a society that is increasingly data-driven to create policy, and to change practices. We just don't have that kind of data for the disability community to find solutions. That's one area.

The other is an issue that was discussed, which is accommodations. The conversation before was really about individuals with severe disabilities, but it's important to understand that disability is a spectrum, it includes a wide group of people, and, actually, includes people that may not themselves identify as having a disability are protected by despite disability rights laws, including in employment situations.

Many employers don't understand those laws, many employees don't understand those laws, and that puts people at a power imbalance, quite frankly, and can lead to some of the challenges that others have discussed in the work force of being inequitably impacted by hiring decisions, and
changes in the employment market.

The other issues, honestly, are around stigma and stereotype for people with disabilities. Although we do have laws to protect against that, it absolutely happens, it happens all day. And when we're thinking about -- I think as Deb was discussing, you know, some of these situations around layoffs, and decisions employers are making, I have far too many friends, and colleagues, and community members who have been on the chopping block of employment because, honestly, of stigma and stereotype, just like in ageism. It's an important issue to address, and think about.

And then there's also critical issues around policies that are in place, limitations of work related to SSI, people with disabilities can only work so much up to a certain, you know, income level, or asset level, that limits their opportunities.

It's certainly not enough for many people to earn a living, and those types of policies impact opportunity, impact their viability in the labor force, and when there's shifts in decisions, and shifts in trade policies, it, again, takes away opportunity, and shifts the power balance for individuals from the disability community.
COMMISSIONER KARPEL: Thank you very much. I wonder if I might ask you one follow-up question. In terms of the lack of data, I know there's some data on participation of individuals with disability in the work force, but I understand there may be deficiencies in that. Do you have view on what kind of data is needed?

MS. SWENOR: Absolutely. Yeah, so you're right, we have data on if you have a job, or not, right, but I don't think that's enough to close the gap; it hasn't been. There's been a gap for decades, and what we need to better understand is career trajectories, better understanding of accommodations, who is getting them, who is not, why not, at an aggregate level.

We also need to better understand that data through an intersectional lens, so an individual -- a black individual with a disability is going to have a different experience in the labor force than a white individual, for example. That's critical.

And, I think, yeah, we just need a deeper depth of data to really understand, as I was indicating, best practices. I think it's going to determine on the setting and the situation, so it's sort of hard for me to speak in
real specifics, I guess I would say, although I appreciate the question.

But, I think, what I would say is to point to collecting better data to get to the place to really finally close that gap, and we just haven't gotten there. We haven't gotten past just do you have a job or not.

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: Okay. Thank you. I'm going to go ahead and move just to reading my next question, but by all means, please continue answering either the first question I -- the first or second question I presented, or to the third. I just am conscious of our time, so I want to make sure I put these all on the table, and we can continue discussing any, or all, of the questions.

So, that next question is looking at that trade piece, so how has trade impacted workers who are aging, disabled, or that do not have a college or high school degree, and how is that impact different based on their age, education level, or whether they have a disability, or an accessibility requirement.

So, everyone who wants to answer that question, or the previous ones, are welcome to participate. And, I think, although for a bit longer, and then we'll look to have maybe
a five-minute break, so let's have a little more discussion, and maybe we'll break in a few more minutes.

So, who was next on my list? Ms. Shaewitz.

MS. SHAEWITZ: Sure. And I'm going to repeat -- try not to repeat what Bonnielin has said. I am coming to this, again, not with a knowledge of trade policy, but from a disability policy background, so I'm going to work around a few issues.

First, you asked about what kind of data we need. We need data to understand, or research to understand which policies are working, and which aren't working. I agree 100 percent that since 1973, and the establishment of the Rehabilitation Act, we've been so focused on just getting people with disabilities a job. It's not enough just to have a job, we need to be thinking long-term about career.

I agree that stigma, assumptions about what a person with a disability can or can't do, and a lack of knowledge about free and existing resources and supports that exist at the federal, at the state, at the community level, prevent employers from hiring people with disabilities. There's also a need to keep employees who become disabled on-the-job, what policies are in place to keep them
on-the-job, what's successful. There are some activities going on out there, I'd be happy to share what I know, but there's not enough.

And I know we're talking a lot about different kinds of industries, but there has been research recently that people with disabilities in white collar positions this study showed that 30 percent of the employees had a disability, but only three percent were open about their disability, they were afraid of being harassed, they were afraid that they would not be promoted, that they would be viewed poorly by their supervisors and co-workers, and for the most part it's true, they will be harassed, they will not be promoted, and they won't be given the same opportunities.

And I have many family members with disabilities, and I could give you a number of anecdotes, but I don't want to take up a lot of time about folks who in my family -- from my parents to my cousins who have experienced exactly those things.

So, the last thing I want to say is during the Great Recession we saw people with disabilities were the first to lose their jobs, they were the last to be rehired. Now, with long COVID, we're going to see more people than
ever enter the disability population, and there are long-term impacts of that.

So, getting around to what would help around trade, I think that there need to be training opportunities, job placement opportunities, but over 90 percent of businesses in the U.S. are small businesses. The vast majority of them, over 80 percent, have five employees, or less, so you're really talking about a small business employer issue when you're talking about hiring and retaining people with disabilities. It's a big industry trade issue, and it's a small business issue as well.

So, thank you for allowing me to speak. I appreciate it.

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: Ms. LeaMond, I know you had your hand up, but you put it down, but if you still want to speak, I understand you have to leave early. So I'd welcome either a comment on any material relevant to today's roundtable if you like to do so before you have to leave. Okay. Well, then let's go to the next hand raised, which is Mr. Enayati.

MR. ENAYATI: Yes, hi.

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: Did I pronounce that wrong?
I think I may have --

MR. ENAYATI: No, no, that was great, that was great.

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: Okay.

MR. ENAYATI: Yeah. So, I appreciate being invited to be a person in this roundtable. A little bit about me, and why I'm here. I am a labor economist at Cornell University, where I hold the role of research faculty. My areas are in disability and compensation. And, so, I'm going to try to do this very quickly some points, and then tie them directly to, I think, the role that policy regarding trade could have. And, again, I am not a trade economist, I'm a labor economist.

So, first of all, I just wanted to, again, echo, and others have said this, disability is an overlapping group. There are individuals that are veterans with disabilities. There is a well-known relationship between aging and disability where people age into a disability, and, so, I think, just being aware that policies that affect one group will affect parts of other groups, and just are all pretty well connected in this world.

One thing that I think is an area for potential
influence would be employer policies and practices. So, accommodations have been brought up a couple times today, and I could not agree more that they range from fairly substantial, to be honest, to fairly insignificant. And if you actually look at Bureau of Labor Statistics collected data, 95 percent of requested accommodations go to individuals without a disability, 95 percent. So, that should put things into some perspective. And, I think, primarily a lot of times employers in their thinking at the strategic level they're not aware that it's that prevalent where the population of individuals without a disability.

And a couple of points here. So, as the U.S. work force transitions from where there are a large share of workers working remote to now hybrid are going back into the office, I think this is a prime opportunity to engage again with U.S. employers about the policies that they have in the workplace that actually promote accommodations in the workplace. I would like to state that I've got some colleagues that are working with the Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment policy through a program called the Employer Assistance and Resource Network, EARN. This is something that they deal with all the time.
And so that, I think, might be a good resource and
connecting point. Two more quick points. I also have some
work on aging, and one thing that we can see has affected
American workers is the change in compensation structure over
time.

So, older workers who have been at one company for
a prolonged period of time are more likely to have a
compensation structure that was geared toward the company
person, right?

So, we think that you're going to be here for 35
years. The way that you design that compensation structure
is that you pay them less than they produce when they first
start off, and you pay them more than they produce at the
end. This is the theoretical framework, right?

What happens is -- when we absolutely see this in
the realized data, so, not just theory -- when recession hits
and there's large amounts of unemployment, older workers that
worked at an employer for a prolonged period of time faced
the steepest weight loss in wages.

So, I'm talking, like, 15 to 18 percent lost in
their wages. Something that policymakers can be aware of is
that a highly at-risk population are older workers when we
move towards a recession. Last point connects to something that Delila said, is the Department of Ed. pushed some new initiatives focusing on shifting the mindset of state locational rehabilitation centers from getting people into a job and instead placing them into a career.

So, getting them into community colleges where they can get a credential or a certificate to then help them establish a higher-paying job. And so, I think these are crossover initiatives that certainly do tie into trade policy. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: Thank you very much. Well, we've sort of hit the hour mark here and a little beyond, so I'm going to pause right now. Next after we take a break, Ms. Hill, Mr. Boone, and Mr. Ericson, I see you have your hands up. So, we will start with you, but let's first take just a five-minute break and then we can resume our conversation. And I think Bill will put up a time clock for all of us so we can keep track of those five minutes.

MR. BISHOP: Yes, we sure will.

(Whereupon, a brief recess was taken.)

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: Welcome back, everyone. So, we can just resume where we left-off, and just again remind
participants here, you're welcome to answer any and all of
the questions we've put out so far today. We don't need to
necessarily do everything in order, and I know they're hard
to keep separate when we ask this question, in terms of what
are the challenges workers are facing getting a job or having
a good-paying job and asking the question about how trade
impacts different workers differently.

So, with that, I think first up after the break is
Ms. Hill.

MS. HILL: Thank you. I just wanted to point out a
couple of things that would be really helpful for workers
with disabilities. One of them would be extension of paid
leave because some of these folks have appointments they need
to go to. They may or may not have it. They may or may not
have the ability to get off.

And the fact that we need paid leave, not unpaid
FMLA -- we need paid leave because a lot of these folks are
facing challenges and having to take off work to go to the
doctor means that they're losing money and they need that
help.

The other thing -- and you can get that, you
know -- you can see that. Sometimes they run out of their
short-term disability and extension of paid leave before the short-term disability that we've negotiated. Some folks have long-term disability, some don't, but they also need to make sure that, you know, that they've got that for their jobs.

And also, the lack of education for folks, you know, a lot of folks might have -- do not have college degrees, and they have problems finding jobs. And I know of some folks that, because of trade, were bounced between several different jobs in the past, like, 10 years -- three or four different jobs, and each time, of course, much like Dan said, you lose money.

And if you've got kids in college, you may not be able to afford for them to go to college anymore because it goes onto the next generation. Because you had a good paying job, you no longer have that job, and there's just, a lot of times, a lack of community supports because these communities are devastated whenever, like, facilities shut down due to trade.

They lose tax dollars through income taxes. They lose the tax dollars to the school system, so the school system degrades, and then unemployment is inadequate because right now we're seeing places where unemployment is only $265
a week. We're seeing places where, you know, it only lasts for 12 weeks.

So, a lot of these things, if you have the trade adjustment assistance, it's really helpful, but even so, if they have to cover -- I believe you have to do some coverage of your healthcare there, if I recall correctly, up front, and there are sometimes -- I know like the State of Virginia had some coverage at a state program that really helped people with that because they covered immediately for their health care.

And there's also just things like making sure that people have mental health programs and adequate mental health care because of the loss of jobs, because these communities often don't have good paying jobs anymore, and there's despair there.

And all you have to do is look in, you know, what happened in some areas of West Virginia with drug abuse and alcohol abuse, and you know that happens after people lose their jobs, and then they don't feel that there's opportunity there for them to get the same kind of a job.

And they see their families lose, you know, the opportunity to go to college. They lose their retirement
security. The one gentleman I saw that bounced between a number of different jobs, there were pensions there, but he didn't have an opportunity to vest because those jobs, he didn't work there long enough to vest for his retirement security.

And also, I'd like to give you a shout-out to JAN, Job Accommodation Network, in terms of disability. They are absolutely fabulous, and not enough people know about them, and not enough employers know about them. And I think that's about it, just to make sure that we invest in communities.

I mean, whenever you see plants shut down, then there needs to be additional investment from the Government into these communities to make up for what happened with the plant shutdown so that they can thrive, as well. So, just a thought there. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: Thank you, Ms. Hill. Mr. Boone?

MR. BOONE: I've been very fortunate to be a part of the United Steelworkers Union for over 50 years, and they've always been at the forefront of trade, and over the last 15 years, I spent nine years as Vice President of our local Union and six years as president of our local union, so
I've had the opportunity to be involved in a lot of the actions against trade, and more recently, the 232 trade case that did help steel workers.

But, you know, through two bankruptcies, two indefinite idles and a permanent shutdown -- and that's just our plant in Cleveland -- but throughout the steel industry, tens of thousands of jobs have been lost. You know, some to technology, of course, but mainly because of imports.

And you'll see in the paper, you know, back when it happened to us, the major closure, bankruptcy, divestment of the pensions and the healthcare, you see. You know, 3,800 people lost their jobs, and it's like, oh, but what's left out of that equation is, in the steel industry anyway, there are three to five peripheral jobs that are also impacted.

The different contractors, the suppliers that keep us going with raw materials, refractories, and everything else. So, there's three-to-five jobs, and they're impacted, too. And so, that spreads out, and in the communities around the plant, you know, the local diners close, you know, the bars closed.

A lot of the services that were there for people become understaffed. And, you know, we talk about the people
with disabilities and, you know, the FMLA for people that
have disabilities that don't impact their ability to work in
the steel mill -- you know, they benefit by the advantage of
FMLA.

But, you know, you have to have a certain number of
employees to even be eligible to participate in FMLA and, you
know, it's just devastating. I have friends that are
veterans that, you know, a little bit older than I am but,
you know, they lost their jobs in the mill, and fortunately,
you know, they had the veteran healthcare, but they go out
and try to get a job, you know, one, they're older, and two,
they have a certain condition that prevents them from taking
these jobs, so then their wages go -- we make a decent living
in the steel mill, and we've had to fight for everything.

But the actions we've taken over trade, you know, I
think we've had tariffs twice, and I think it was during the
Bush Administration we might have had some tariff relief.
Again, the 232 helped, but, you know, they call us
"protectionists", but we're not protectionists. All we want
is an opportunity to participate fairly again.

You know, the steelworkers, we're not against
trade; we're for fair trade, but free trade is different, and
it just impacts all of the communities around us. Even now, you know, it was mentioned earlier with -- I forget the company they mentioned, but, you know, now it's made in China -- probably made in China.

And that's the mentality, I think, of big businesses. I have a friend who has an MBA from Harvard, and he said that one of the things they tell you there is people don't matter. Profit and the shareholders matter. So, that has always been something that we fight against.

There is discrimination against the disabled, and even though it's better, it's still there. And when they do this, it becomes not about the lives that are impacted, it's about money. And to see all these people lose their jobs and then fight for a job that even has half of the wages, maybe less, no healthcare.

My son's healthcare plan is catastrophic. The first $10,000 come out of his pocket. And, you know, the healthcare industry is, a lot of times, money-driven. And, you know, all the polices that we make are helpful and I'm proud of what the Government's always trying to do, help the disabled, and they need it.

But, you know, when you have everything coming in
from the other -- like now, we're worried about China because we get so much from them, if they become adversarial to the United States, we're going to be in trouble. So, you know, the imports are necessary.

There was a time when the steel industry couldn't provide enough steel for the American demand and imports were okay -- you know, to make what the American companies shouldn't do, and I'm a big proponent of Made in America.

And it's not just steel. It's everything that's imported. We could have so many jobs right now that are hiring. You know, you can find a job, but look at the wages that you get when you find these jobs. Everybody's hiring right now, like where I live, and they can't find people to work because, you know, we talked about unemployment later, and if you get, like, $325 a week, then you go get a job, after you hit that amount, they start taking money away.

So, you're locked in, and whether you're disabled or not, the system works against you, and I'm really grateful that, you know, the ITC is looking into that, and I'm hopeful that we continue this path, you know, the way society is now, we're looking to include all aspects of society, you know, whatever you are, whether it's gender, disabilities, or
whatever, all these people have to be included.

And the policies that we're making against trade will create more jobs that people should be able to do that they otherwise couldn't. So, I am a big proponent of fair trade, and I appreciate what we're doing here. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: Thank you very much. So, next up, I think we have -- Mr. Ericson, did you have your hand up, or did you put it down? All right. In the meantime, I think next up is Mr. Attig.

MR. ATTIG: Thank you. Commissioner, I think that you'll hear a much different story if you had CEOs and corporate economists on this call today, and I'm just really glad you have workers talking about it. The fact is, we have two economies in this country. We have an economy that works for CEOs, Wall Street, multi-national companies, companies that are working to cut every penny to give us products, but at the same time, you know, not pay their workers at a fair wage, et cetera, to take advantage of that.

Since NAFTA -- I mean, we can go back farther than that -- but when you think about the losses in American communities that millions and millions of manufacturing jobs and factory jobs that have been lost, we see who that
targets. We see who that devastates. It's communities; it's people.

We need trade policies that set the tone. Those CEOs would tell you that trade is one of the major parts of the economy. Well, if that's so, trade policy needs to work for the most important part of the American economy, and that's the workers -- end-stop, in my opinion.

Workers need to be able to show their value or be shown their value, and our policies don't do that. From trade policy, that turns into labor policy, and we all know where labor policy is right now. It's rigged against regular people -- not if you're just a union member or not.

Union policy drives up wages for everybody. So, you know, the idea that policy impacts labor which then impacts things like wages. Today, it's almost embarrassing to say that there are companies that are moving to the South, places that doesn't have high wages, high labor, and setting up shop so they can pay the workers who manufacture the goods that we buy, at a lower wage. Something's wrong there.

So, to me, there's going to be a lot more smarter people giving comments and things about the exact things that we could change in the policies, but the reality of it, we
need a trade policy that works for the American workers. Things like the TAA that got mentioned earlier on, right? TAA is something that needs to be reinstated. It needs to be reauthorized. It needs to be expanded. I mean, we don't only have trade policies that's affecting workers. We have a change in technology and a change in the workforce. The future of work is much different than it is -- than it was before.

And between 2010 and 2014, 23,000 veterans used TAA. So, it's something that is being used, and it can be used to benefit folks as we shift these jobs. But I just want to make sure that, you know, the reality of it is that I think a lot of people on this call would challenge the fact -- whether you're from the disability community, the aging community, or labor community, the workers -- is that these companies, these policies, are rigged against the people, and especially in the communities that need them most.

So, what the trade commission can do is look at data, right. Look at the communities where these losses have happened. Look at the communities where jobs haven't been replaced since 2010 when we lost all the factory jobs, to
2001 when China became part of the WTO, right? Look at the communities that lost their jobs. Look at the communities today, and you're going to see the numbers that show what we're all talking about anecdotally.

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: Thank you very much. We're going to go to Mr. Noll, and then I'll move to the next question, which is asking about programs and policies that can help. So, I know we've already touched on that with many of your responses. So, go ahead, Mr. Noll.

MR. NOLL: The way that I look at it, I mean, there's like an interconnectivity to all of this. You start with bad trade policy or whatever. You know, go back to NAFTA and what happened with NAFTA, and it was terrible, and it was detrimental to working people in this country.

We lost so much. Well then, you turn around, you look at the community that that happened in and, you know, as, I believe, Janet said, that, you know, you decimate the tax base because you don't have people working. You, you know, have social programs that are very much -- they're actually more needed now because you have less people working and you have less tax money going in to help those social programs to help people.
And it's like dominoes, and you just watch them fall one after another, and it's like we're participating in a race to the bottom. And it all starts with trade policy. We need to make sure, as Dan said, you know, we basically need a fair shot. You give us a fair shot, we'll compete with everyone.

But we can't compete against somebody paying somebody three dollars an hour because nobody up here can live on that. It's just not possible. Then, you create a situation where you've saturated the workforce with unemployed people, and then you have people with disabilities and, you know, older people, that they're being discriminated against, but the discrimination gets far worse when the employment pool is so large and you have people clamoring for jobs.

I mean, the discrimination is super easy at that point for employers to just ignore, well, that guy, you know, has a disability or this woman can't do this, so we won't even try to accommodate and we'll just, you know -- there's so many people we can choose from. And that kind of race to the bottom mentality, it hurts every one of us, and that's all I had to say.
COMMISSIONER KARPEL: Thank you for sharing that.

All right. Well, I'll move to another question, but I did want to mention too that -- encourage everyone to participate, even if you feel another participant has said exactly what you're going to say. The point is to gather as many voices as we can.

So, don't feel shy about repeating something that maybe you've heard another participant say because it's valuable to know that maybe you share that view as well. So, we've already touched on this to some degree. So, I'll just read it off for completeness.

What policies or programs have been successful in helping workers to deal with adverse impacts from trade or to take advantage of trade-related opportunities. Are there ways that policies or programs need to be changed to better address the needs of workers who are aging or who are disabled or do not have a college or high school degree? Are there areas in which more or better resources are needed?

Ms. Hill, I'll start with you. You had your hand up first.

MS. HILL: Yes, I'd like to point out a little bit more focus on apprenticeship programs and retraining people would be good. Because right now, we see a shortage of
people in the trades, and I realize it takes a long time to
train someone, but there's a lot of people that I think that
could have been trained if, you know, whenever you have a
plant shutdown, or give it help to move to another community.
That would also be helpful, some sort of moving allowance,
something like that, so that they can reestablish themselves
someplace else.

And I did want to throw in there, you know,
just -- can we have less corporate power on the part of CEOs?
Because, you know, many of them don't invest in their
communities, they don't see any kind of, you know -- as Mike
said, all they want it corporate profit.

And they already have record profits, but it's
never enough. And I would like to see, like -- I just want
to say, like, we had a facility that was Milo
(phonetic) -- they produced generic drugs. They were one of
the few generic drug producers in the country.

There are questions about the safety of imported
drugs -- generic drugs and the dosage. Roughly 80 percent
are being imported. To me, it seems like there would have
been a public policy, you know, a public policy point there
that we should have more drugs made here.
And also what happened was when they were purchased, Milo was purchased, they then gave the facility over to West Virginia University so nobody could buy it and produce more drugs there in the U.S.. So, I just have a question on that. Thank you very much.

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: Thank you for sharing. Next up, let's see here, Ms. Shaewitz?

MS. SHAEWITZ: Yes, thank you. I wanted to share a few things around policies to consider and maybe places to look at for possible policies. It was mentioned that the U.S. Department of Labor has an Office of Disability Employment Policy.

That's your partner; that's your friend right in the U.S. Government. They are currently leading a study of states on policies that support stay-at-work and return-to-work for people who acquired disability on the job.

I think what they're learning can be translatable to trade industries. Just last fall, nine state vocational rehabilitation agencies were awarded grants to demonstrate practices that lead to advanced careers for people with disabilities, that includes a focus on STEM careers, registered apprenticeships -- I'm so glad that was
mentioned -- and industry trades.

So, I think there are some shifts happening at the State level maybe we can learn from. That vocational rehab, or VR system, is there for people with disabilities, but a lot of people aren't aware that it's there, including employers, and there are other Federal and State and local job training and retraining programs that exist that aren't designed to be inclusive.

So, we've got to really design programs and policies that think about inclusion from the beginning. I had mentioned small business owners before. The SBA, Small Business Administration, works with small businesses, but we need to provide support specific to disabled business owners.

That includes loans to help a group that has traditionally been more impoverished, and specifically, Black, Latinx, and Native American people with disabilities who are severely under-resourced. They don't have the same net worth or savings as white people and Asian people with disabilities, who still earn and save less than people without disabilities.

A couple other notes, there are Federal Contractor
Requirements that target awards to service disabled veterans but not just a category for people with disabilities -- or businesses, rather, with disabilities, disability-led, and the Federal Government is a model employer. So, there might be some things there that we can learn from that can be shared across business and industry.

Fair Trade policies, like this event is trying to lead to, need that disability lens. I'm so glad that you've included people from the disability community here. People with disabilities should be in those conversations about designing policy, including measuring implementation so that you can make sure that inclusion really is built into the design of policies, and I would say the same for all of the people on this call who are talking from the worker perspective.

Workers need to be informing the policies that are decided, not just business owners, not just Federal policymakers. And finally, I think we're all kind of dancing around this.

We live in a capitalist society. It values profits over people, but it makes really good business sense to put your employees first because then you're going to have great...
products, you're going to have great customer service, you're going to have positive outcomes for everyone.

So, maybe one person makes a few million dollars less one year and the rest of us make $10,000 more a year. But that really means treating employees well, valuing the qualities they bring, and it's not always about the most widgets that a person can produce.

People can be valued for a tangible and intangible assets that they bring, and I will close there. Thank you again for allowing me to speak.

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: Thank you very much. All right. Mr. Kaldes?

MR. KALDES: So, on trade policy, I think, when you look at TAA and you look at the median age of the TAA beneficiary, it's 51-years-old. And so, there is, you know, a real need to broaden the lens of how trade policy impacts workers through an aging lens.

And so, we would suggest that the American seniors (phonetic) -- TAA needs to be expanded to account for the sheer numbers of older adults that are impacted by trade displacement.

But then, in addition, when you look at the other
senior-related and age-related job retraining programs across the Government, they often are uncoordinated or underfunded, and ignore other aspects to how these programs are deployed locally.

So, for example, their local dollars will often fall to stereotypes about workers and older workers, which I talked about earlier because there's these systemic issues around ageism and discrimination. Separate from TAA and job retraining efforts, I think there's an opportunity to review just broader trade policy mechanisms and how certain trade policy decisions impact our community, in particular, older adults.

And what I mean by that is, when there are decisions being made at the Federal policy level on tariffs, consider their impact on older adults. For example, take nutrition. During the pandemic, we've had supply chain issues that were exacerbated by some trade decisions, and food was not being delivered to the most vulnerable populations that needed it.

Think about ASA members, for example, who represent community-based organizations who literally did not have full packaging to deliver meals, if you were, say, a Meals On...
Wheels locally. Similarly, think about tariffs on aluminum. While they may be important for other reasons, think about the impact on the cost to purchase these aluminum cans and other supplies needed to deliver food that, you know, if you're a corporate entity, you can either absorb those tariffs or pass them onto the consumer.

If you're a non-profit entity dealing with tariffs, you don't have any alternative means to absorb those costs because you're either on a fixed Federal grant budget -- so, our nutrition budgets needs to be expanded -- or you just done provide service. There aren't tax breaks for non-profits to absorb the tariffs.

So, I would suggest that, from a trade policymaking perspective, intentionally and an outreach to stakeholders beyond simply posting a notice in the Federal Register is increasingly important. I think we need to reach into communities and inform them about why they need to participate in the process to help improve -- whether it's trade policy, or any policy, for that matter.

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: Thank you very much for sharing. Who do we have next? I believe Mr. Attig?

MR. ATTIG: Thanks again. And I'm sure that we're
not going to solve every trade policy through this call just
today, but the reality of it, we need to work on trade policy
in a direct way, whether it's TAA, other improvements that
work for the workers.

But in regards to other things that we can
do -- labor. Labor standards, labor policies, both in
America but overseas. There is no way that we should be
consuming as much products that are being made through slave
labor, as many people would call it -- underserved, underpaid
communities.

So, we need to have labor standards on both sides
of this conversation. And I know steelworkers would probably
say a lot about that, too, and I truly believe that. But the
reality of it, when it comes to American policies, when we
look at high school-educated folks or lower, in the Veterans
community in 2008, Veterans with just a simple high school
diploma or equivalency made 26 percent more than a non-union
Veteran counterpart.

Think about it. 26 percent -- that is a massive
increase, right? But when you look at the general
populations, it's even a bigger number. And for people with
less than a college diploma, in 2008 it was 49 percent more
with a union contract.

High school diploma is 35 percent. Some college, 43 percent. The union difference matters. Union standards matter to the American society and workers around the world. And I bet you can look at that number -- it's very similar across the board for different demographics that are represented on this call.

So, again, I'll lead with me not being an expert but saying that trade policy needs to work for people and workers, and labor needs to be on both sides of the pond, especially for the American workers that really need a shot in the arm today.

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: Thank you. Thank you very much. Okay. I have a few more lined-up: Mr. Boone, Ms. Swenor, and then Mr. Walker. I just want to note, we are getting to almost the 3 o'clock hour, about 10 more minutes.

I think we've had a really great and rich conversation, so I'm anticipating going past three, including to open the floor up to the other Commissioners observing today to ask a few questions that they may have. So, I just wanted to flag that for people. I know some may have time commitments, and I respect that as well. Mr. Boone, you're
up next.

MR. BOONE: From my opinion, a lot of the trade policies -- and they're two ways, you know, the trade policies. Sometimes it's to help the American worker, and a lot of times, they don't. So, you know, a lot of these things come through Congress. Our representatives are elected to represent the people, but a lot of times you see that where they're not listening to their constituents.

One of their constituents said that, you know, ship our jobs overseas. So, you know, we need to get Congress onboard. We need education programs. We need to educate the public in a better way to reach out to them.

The steelworkers have a program called Rapid Response, and they send out to all their members, and we try to get them educated, involved, if there's inaction someplace, to get it to go and stand up for what's right for America and the workers. And, you know, unions are wonderful, but, you know, I can't remember, I think maybe there's 50 percent of the public workers are maybe union, but only about 20 percent or so in the private sector are unionized.

So, a lot of times, we get to benefit more from the
trade policies than other people actually do, you know, like
the 232 case again, which is more recent. That was
beneficial to us. But something else, I think.

You know, we have the term "disabled", and I don't
know -- you know, there was a lot of awful words or phrases
they used to term the disabled in the past or now, but
there's a stigma attached to the term "disabled", and we have
to change that. You say somebody is disabled, and
immediately they go right to the far thing, you know,
disabled as you possibly can, and it's not the case.

I have a friend whose son is disabled, and he just
won Employee of the Month at Giant Eagle. So, you know, we
have to work on this stigma, you know. Disability does not
mean useless. Disability does not mean you can't contribute
to society, you know? I have friends that have disabilities,
and they're amazing, the determination they use to get
around.

I am considered disabled under the ADA -- you know, the
Americans with Disabilities Act was a wonderful thing for,
you know, the country as a whole. And they're not a
throw-away society. And they are impacted harder than other
people. They have a job, and they train, and train, and
train, and train, and then they finally get a job, and then because stuff comes from overseas, now they don't have a job anymore, and they're lost.

And the despair and everything comes back that it always did, from my personal experience of seeing it. So, you know, I think we need to look at the term "disabled" and find another definition of it. Because are they really? Are they really disabled? I don't have the answer for that. I'm sure someone can speak on it much more eloquently than I can.

But I'm proud of what the Government is trying to do for us and, you know, if we have, you know, Republican Presidents, we have Democratic Presidents, and they tend to follow, you know, different philosophies. And right now, it seems like the policy is favoring the American worker.

In some ways it doesn't look like that, but overall, we have to get engaged and we have to make our voices heard. Because a country like China, they're buying-up America now, and they're setting up their plants in the United States, but they don't want a union.

So, there is protectionism on both sides of this, but we have to give the disabled people a fair shot, and I think that comes with changing the terminology and how we
look at them and how we refer to them. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: Thank you very much, Mr. Boone. Ms. Swenor?

MS. SWENOR: Hi, yes. Thank you, Dan, for saying all of those things. I actually had my hand raised and then Delila said much better than I could've just about everything I was going to say and more. And I just want to endorse that, including, you know, looking to ODEP, Office of Disability Employment Policy for good policies and practices and doing this really great work for employment in people with disabilities.

I do want to speak to actually what was just said about term "disability". You know, I am proudly disabled. I don't think there's anything actually wrong with the word, to your point, Dan -- and I think this is what you were saying; I don't want to over-speak for you, though -- it's the connotation.

It's society's view of it, right, that probably needs to change. The disability community is changing and shifting, and the rest of the world just hasn't evolved along with us. And Dan said it really well. That has to change. We're not a throw-away population. That was very well-said,
very beautifully said, so thank you for that.

And I also want to echo the comments that others have made in that, you know, people are policy. We have to be included in these policy decisions, and that doesn't happen enough. And there isn't enough thought about who isn't in the room when these conversations are happening.

People that are oppressed and marginalized sometimes don't have equitable opportunity to be included, even when there is outreach, and I want to elevate that, making sure the outreach is accessible, the opportunities to participate are accessible and inclusive you know enduring, you know, working extra (phonetic) hours, perhaps, in certain situations if people are paying by the hour in jobs that are hourly wages, things like that, to make sure individuals actually have a true opportunity to give their voice and participate.

And also, as a Data Scientist, to say, we see that in the data. Data are a powerful tool, and data oppression is a real thing. And what I mean by that, is data are not as neutral as I sometimes think people assume them to be.

The exclusion of data collection on disability is not happenstance. It is, in fact, a reflection of what we
just discussed. Society's view of people with disabilities is not even important enough to collect data on. And then that translates into being left out of policy decisions, which are data-driven.

And so, I think when we think about including community, it's not just in forums like this. It's including community in all of these places, in decision about the data to advance the policy, how that data should be collected, how that data should be used, what data should be considered more important than other data, and having, as an academic, a bunch of academics sit in a room and make those decision doesn't always work.

It probably almost shouldn't be the drive. It should be the community that should drive the decisions, inform the people doing those analyses, and then inform the policy. Thank you so much.

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: Thank you. Thank you for that very much. Mr. Walker.

MR. WALKER: Hello, everyone, and thank you for the opportunity to participate today. It's been quite a discussion. Thank you very much. I am Edwin Walker. I am at the Administration for Community Living which is within
the Department of Health and Human Services, and we represent the interest of people with disabilities and older individuals.

And to Mr. Boone's comment and Ms. Swenor's comment, we tried to address that issue, that negative connotation of being disabled. And we used people-first language by saying "people with a disability" so that a person is the individual you see and hear first.

You don't think about their ability or their disability, and we are focused on combating issues of ableism as well as issues of ageism, because the discriminatory aspects of that really impact the ability of people to really live what we strive for, which is to live an engaged life in their communities.

We didn't name the agency the Administration for Aging and Disabilities, we named it after the aspirations of the populations we're serving. That is community living. People want to live in the community and be actively engaged in the community.

I also wanted to focus on what Ms. Hill identified in response to the initial question about programs. I think the concept of apprenticeship and retraining is something
that we should focus on. I'm glad she mentioned ODEP.

Within the Administration for Community Living, for people living with disabilities, we are focused on competitive, meaningful employment.

I heard many comments about how, because of trade, industry has left, and what we're left with here is often low-paying jobs that you can't make a living on. And so, we want to ensure that people -- all people of all ages and all abilities -- have the ability to be employed in meaningful employment.

And within the Department of Labor, there is another division, the Employment and Training Administration, and they run the only Federally-funded older-worker program, and it's the Senior Community Service Employment Program, designed to retrain older individuals -- low-income older individuals with very limited prospects for employment -- retrain them and get them back into the workforce in order to transition them to full-time employment that allows them to not live in poverty, that allows them to be financially secure, and to continue living in the community.

I would be remiss if I didn't comment on Peter's
comments, as well. The budget implications of trade policy on non-profit community-based organizations is critical. We need to focus on that and always remember those implications because costs are always passed down to the lowest level. And so, it has an impact on our nationwide network of community-based organizations, made up of dedicated individuals, as they attempt to provide services and support to enable people to live a productive life.

Again, thank you for this opportunity. It's been a great discussion.

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: Thank you very much for that contribution? Ms. Hodge?

MS. HODGE: Thank you. Earlier in the call I mentioned the convention on the rights for persons with disabilities. So, we're thinking about Congress and policies. The failure of Congress to actually ratify that convention had some huge implications.

For example, when a country that has ratified the convention is looking for expertise in products, they're not looking to the U.S. now; they're looking to other countries that ratified. And so, a real example is there was a country in Africa that wanted a fleet of busses -- accessible
busses -- but they didn't come to the U.S., and we've been doing accessible busses for decades.

They went to the Chinese, and what they got was inaccessible busses with the handicap logo on the side of the bus. That was basically it. So, think about assisted technology that we have in the U.S. that's not being shared because those countries are going to those countries that ratified.

Just a lot of workers with disabilities lost out on that because they're working with companies that produce, you know, products that are for the disabled. So, you know, there was a lot of missed opportunities there, and I want everybody to keep that in mind when we, you know, hopefully look towards trying for ratification again.

There's huge business implications in the disability community. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: Thank you for sharing that.

Ms. Hill?

MS. HILL: I just wanted to add just that there needs to be some sort of calculus of societal cost for these trade decisions that is much more detailed. When companies take them overseas, they look at their profit, but they don't
look at what happens to the communities.

Also, I would also like to point out that a lot of communities have, you know, once companies have left, there's a lack of public transportation for people to get to jobs. They may have lost their car or something like that because of these adverse trade decisions and they're not making as much money.

I would also like to point out, just to make a couple points for disabilities, SSI disability takes a long time to get -- sometimes, like, two years -- there's a long backlog, which needs to be addressed -- and it also needs to have a higher payment.

Because I've talked to folks that have difficulties on surviving on it and, you know, they might need additional services. The services may or may not be there. I also wanted to put a plug in for increased investment in public housing, especially accessible housing.

And, you know, there are people that can -- and somebody else made the point for services -- there are people that don't have accessible housing and don't have the services and can no longer stay in their homes, and they have to go into some sort of assisted living when, if there were
better services, they could stay in their homes.

And also, I want to put a plug out there for increasing the minimum wage because that desperately needs to be increased, and please get rid of the sub-standard minimum wage for those with disabilities. I don't think that differently-abled workers should be considered worthless. That is ridiculous, and I just want to make sure that that gets addressed as well.

I think that's probably what I wanted to make sure -- oh, I did want to put a plug in for, like, trying to get some sort of encouragement for companies to hire workers that are older. There is a huge amount -- as other have said -- of ageism, and I know a number of people who are trying to find jobs now who it's supposed to be a hot job market, but they can't get their resumes even considered.

And older workers with these automated resume services, I think older workers need to be trained to make sure their resumes are getting heard, and I wonder if, a lot of times, they're just not getting completely screened-out. I know a number of older workers who just cannot find something.

And some of them are educated. Some of them have
advanced degrees. But younger workers end up getting hired instead of older workers. Thank you very much.

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: Thank you very much. Okay.

We're going to go to Mr. Erickson and then Mr. Noll, and then I'm going to open it up to my fellow Commissioners to see if they have any questions, since we are getting late in the time. So, Mr. Erickson, I'll let you go ahead.

MR. ERICKSON: Sure, yeah, thank you very much for allowing me to participate in the roundtable. I really appreciate it. So, my background, I work with the Dying (phonetic) institute on employment and disability at Cornell University. I've been doing disability research for over 20 years now.

I just wanted to speak a little bit to Bonnielin's concern about the quality of disability data. I agree that it isn't perfect, but if you go back 20 years, you know, like the Census Bureau, the 2000 census, was really one of the first censuses that actually asked any significant questions on disability. And since then, the ACS has included six questions.

Again, not saying that they're the perfect questions, at all, but at least there are six questions, as
opposed to maybe just one question. The Current Population Survey, since 2008, has been asking the same set of questions. The CDC's regular (phonetic) behavioral risk factor surveillance system survey has been asking.

Again, I'm not saying these are perfect surveys by any stretch or, you know, perfect questions, but there is a lot of data around -- the Federal Government has expanded the use of those questions though, I think it's about 10 different Federal surveys now.

So, there is a lot of data out there, in terms of -- you know, where there really identifies all people with disabilities -- no, it doesn't. The one that you mentioned, the survey on income and program participation, which is where the 67 million number comes from, is, you know, by far, you know, the most comprehensive.

But unfortunately, trying to get that many questions in some of these larger surveys is just problematic. I also just wanted to mention that there is, for Federal Contractors, there is the §503 that encourages Federal Contractors to hire people with disabilities on the EARN project funded by ODEP, and we are, you know, working with employers, trying to understand what else can be done to
help improve employer practices and policies to, you know, hire, and promote and retain employees with disabilities.

So, you know, we're working on that. It's a complicated issue, but hopefully we're -- with some progress in trying to figure out, you know, what can be done so employers can do a better job of hiring, recruiting, and promoting employees with disabilities and what sort of policies and practices they can implement to improve that.

So, I guess, yeah -- see Bonnielin you have your hand up, so I'll let you jump-in.

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: No, I appreciate that. And I suspect Ms. Swenor wants to talk a bit about the data issues, too. So, Mr. Noll, with some indulgence, I think you were next, but maybe we'll jump to Ms. Swenor and they can talk about the data.

And I guess I would throw it to you, the question on the data. How much, if at all, does the data capture disabilities that aren't physical disabilities, that maybe are mental or learning disabilities or other kinds of disabilities?

MR. SWENOR: Thank you. So, first, yes, what Bill just said is correct. The ACS questions have been rolled-out
and are the approved HHS disability questions. There are six questions. They are ascertaining disability beyond physical disability -- visual, hearing, independent living.

What they miss is mental health, or mental illness. They're missing learning disabilities. And I agree with what Bill said. Perfect should not be the enemy of good here. I have given other testimony endorsing those questions to that exact point. We have the Washington group portions, which the community of people with disabilities endorses more strongly.

But there is that. What I would say, though, is what I was referring to on the data is what we do not have is a depth of data on people with disabilities within a workplace environment, right? We have these national surveys, but as a data scientist, sometimes I have pause on those data.

Again, good shouldn't be the enemy of perfect, but when we really want to drill-down on policy, those samples are nationally represented based on gender, race, ethnicity, and geographic location. Does that mean that it is representing our population of people with disabilities?

It is not sampled, it is not part of the sampling
frame, and there is some discrepancies in the estimates.

That 67 million actually is from the most recent estimates of disability prevalence, which is from a report my center put out using the Bertha's data.

So, I think that when we talk about the disability data, we do have to be cautious -- but again, I agree with what Bill said and perfect shouldn't be the enemy of good -- but we do need more fine data in understanding why we still haven't closed those employment gaps.

And to me, that begs the question of, the data we have, even from, you know, 2000 census moving forward, hasn't gotten us there. What is the data we need? We need to go back to the community, ask them, right -- that's my point -- what is the data we need, where are the questions we need to follow to close this gap, and then collect the data around that.

And that, I think, just hasn't, honestly, happened. The community hasn't been engaged enough in this process or in those data collection efforts. So, that was my point.

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: Thank you very much. So, Mr. Noll, we'll wrap up with you, and then we'll see if other Commissioners have questions.
MR. NOLL: What I wanted to bring-up, like I said earlier, like, I look at this thing as kind of a domino effect, and I believe it was Dan earlier that had talked about how our politicians are not listening to their constituents. They're basically listening to big business, and I believe Janet had said something about wrestling away corporate power.

And I really think that we need to focus on overturning Citizens United. I think it is terrible for our country, and I think we need to focus on -- we have anti-trust laws on the books, and we are not using them. We are not implementing them in any way, shape, or form, and there's monopolies all over this country that should've been dismantled a long time ago.

We have corporations competing against workers instead of each other like capitalism is intended. They should be competing against one another, but they've gelled together, you know, like the Summer of Love with the cable companies. Like they've just divided the country, and now you can't -- you have one cable option where you're at, and it's not acceptable. And our politicians need to stand up and start enforcing the antitrust laws. And that's all I
COMMISSIONER KARPEL: Thank you very much.

Quickly, Mr. Attig, I hate to cut off any conversations we're considering.

MR. ATTIG: Very quick on this point. We were having a conversation about trade policy, and we're talking about childcare, healthcare, workers' wages, something is not right here, right. But those are the policies that we have to change to make sure American workers are part of this economy, disability rights really.

We need an economy that works for the working class people, and it starts with these companies. They're taking the tax cuts, they're taking the money out of the communities. We should make policies around people basically just trying to work, and live their lives, and that's what I hear a lot of here. So, I just had to make that point. I'm sorry.

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: No, no, no need to apologize. Thank you for adding that. All right. Well, let's see if Vice Chair Stayin, do you have anything, or Commissioner Johanson, any questions you want to ask?

VICE CHAIR STAYIN: Yeah, I have a couple of
comments. I was taken by the comment that disabled people are not a throw away group, they need to be -- and they have to have a seat at the policy decision table, and, I think, that that is just so, so true, and it's so right on.

I remember years ago that I had a very good friend who was disabled, and he was here in Washington, he wasn't working for a lobbying group, he was here lobbying for the American for Disabilities Act, and he would go, you know, to Senate office to Senate office, and he would sit there with his disability, and he would give conversations.

I'm sure he wasn't the only one, but that's kind of what it's -- that's really what helps, and, I think, that is what needs to be done to get these things accomplished. You don't have to come to Washington to do it. You can go talk to your Congressman, you can go talk to your Senators. They have offices around your state. Talk to them. Bring together a group. Make it clear what's happening, what's needed, and ask for their help.

And, I mean, no matter what party they are, I think we're talking about American people, American disabled workers, American older people, older people who still have wonderful skills to get in there and do that work very
effectively. We have to think about that, and I feel so strongly about that.

There was an interesting article in the paper today about education and how important is that for jobs, and the point was being made what's more important, a college education or a person who has skills, and to me I don't know where that's coming out.

It seems to me that the job skills are more important than the fact that somebody got an education. I'm not saying -- I got an education, and I'm very pleased having had it, but that's another issue, and I wonder how that plays out in the companies when you're seeking jobs.

Enough of my talk. I'd like to hear from you.

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: Anyone want to offer a reaction to anything raised by Vice Chairman Stayin, or speak to this particular issue about -- I heard this too of employers sort of giving major -- requiring a college degree without sort of thinking about whether the skills required for the job really would benefit from having a worker with a college degree. Ms. Ackerman?

MS. ACKERMAN: Yes. I am one of the older folks, so I was one of them that told my kids -- when we were
growing up it was like you're supposed to go to college, you're supposed to go to college, and it ended up like I had said earlier, people would come out of school and not be able to find a job, and then they'd have their B.A., or whatever degree, and they'd be working a press right next to me making the same money that I was working until later.

I clearly think it's important for people to have an education just because we need people like -- that are collecting the data, and doing all the studies, and doing all the research. We need people to have an education.

I have a younger son, my youngest son. He's not young now, but my younger son has always been a very hard worker. He was wheeling and dealing baseball cards when he was maybe 12, you know, to 14. He got married very young, right. In fact, he was still a senior in high school when he got married, and they're still married. They have two grown kids that did go to college. One of them is working on his second Master's Degree.

But my son started working right away because he had a child, and he was a hard worker, and he was a supervisor very young in a factory. He worked at several different factories each time moving to make better money.
Each time he moved was an improvement in his wages, or his benefits, or the working conditions.

He was one that would -- always cared about the workers. Even though he ended up being a supervisor very young, he would be a supervisor, he always cared about the workers. But it ended up he'd be working in a factory, and next thing you know, that factory, like Rubbermaid, he did work at Rubbermaid at one time, would get sold, and the next thing you know, he didn't have a job.

And then he'd go to another factory, and he'd be in a position there. He'd start in maybe as a factory worker, but be promoted, and be in management, and he'd lose that job.

He was one of the people that it's important to be making things. People have pride in making things, and, I think, we need to have more of that in the United States, not just people doing service jobs, not that they're not important, but eventually I told my son -- even though I was able to raise him at a good paying manufacturing job, and some of the places he worked were union facilities also, even though he was in management, they paid good -- but they closed. I said, look, you got to get out of manufacturing.
If you want to raise your two sons, you have to find something else.

And he didn't have an education. I mean, he didn't have college degrees, he had different stuff he took, but he ended up he left manufacturing and he did some mortgage broker stuff, or whatever, but eventually ended up in a tire place, and just like the manufacturing places, the tire places are affected by the sales places -- I mean, tire business, not a manufacturing, they're affected by all the jobs that are going overseas, you know, the supply chain.

Like we said, it's the small -- if the big place leaves, so do the small places, they all shut down, and when a big place decides it wants to come back, there's no -- none of the supply chains are here because it went overseas when they left, you know.

So, now, that place kept getting sold, and, so he would be a manager in that place thinking he was going to be there until he retired, and they kept selling, and they kept being not the community business, not the local tire place that was for the community anymore, now it's this big chain place.

And, so, finally, he bought his -- got his own. He
started his own business. He bought a small tire place from somebody that was getting ready to retire. He's got tire and mechanics, and he treats his employees well. They have trouble getting parts, and stuff.

But it's a shame, he is a dedicated, hardworking person. He can't get jobs at some places because he didn't have the college degree, but he's very successful now without the college degree, and some people just want men to have college degrees, and there are people that need to do stuff with their hands. And, I guess they're both important, but we shouldn't slight one or the other.

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: Thank you, Ms. Ackerman. I appreciate you sharing that. Mr. Attig?

MR. ATTIG: So, this is a really personal question for me, I think. I was raised really poor in southern Illinois, and I had severe learning disabilities until I was 13. I barely could read and write. So, that being mentioned is really important.

I struggled through high school when it came to doing work. I was always very smart. I always had skills. I was always a leader. And that was one thing why I joined the military because I knew it was going to give me an
opportunity to learn and improve myself, and I did. I became a leader of soldiers. I was in charge of a Battalion of 25, in charge of 14 soldiers, two Sergeants, and combat out of combat. And I excelled in the military. I had a uniform on. I wasn't a poor kid with learning disabilities from southern Illinois.

When I came home I faced the devastating fact that I lost almost all of that overnight. I came home without a job, a degree, and a future. I dropped out of college because of issues I had from fighting in combat for as long as I did.

But the lack of education, I don't have a college education, that first year coming home was devastating to me, and the worst day of my life after about eight months into this year just struggling, I went and interviewed for a job. I'd been asked by the H.R. folks at a job fair that I'd come to be a mid-level manager at a pet food distribution center being paid $13 an hour with some benefits, and told seven people how to load stuff (phonetic) on the back of trucks.

I just led 14 soldiers and two Sergeants in combat for 17 months. I interviewed for about an hour. I thought I had the job. He didn't want to talk about my education. He
wanted to talk about Army stuff, and the last question he
asked, he said, you know, in your packet where is your
college degree at?

And I had to leave that job. I didn't have the
tools to argue my stuff. The worst day of my life. I had to
borrow $20 to go to that job, and, again, think about eight
months ago I was considered a hero when I came home.

There was a story where I was at (phonetic) a
welding hud. And about a month after that job interview,
after I almost became a statistic, the statistic we talk
about, I was already homeless, I was already couch surfing,
couch surfing from my mom's house to my brother's house. I
got into a welding program and became a huge pipefitter, and
that led, you know, to this call today.

So, it's not -- all right. Unfortunately, it's
looked at as something that's slighted, and, unfortunately,
these trade policies create the system against people like
me, you know, people like Bonnie. So, it's personal. It
means a lot to recognize that. There's a lot of people with
skills, but just like someone said about apprenticeship
courses, if you're giving somebody a job as a welder paying
nine bucks an hour without any benefits, what's the point.
So, there's a lot of people with skills that just need an opportunity, and their shot at it, and they don't have that.

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: We really appreciate you sharing that. Thank you. Who is next? Mr. Boone.

MR. BOONE: I'd like to speak to Mr. Stayin's point, and, you know, the point about education, college degrees, and apprenticeships. So, in our industry there's a severe lack of maintenance people, and every industry, and every country it's hard to find electricians, welders, all what they would term skilled trades.

I grew up in a small town in southwestern Pennsylvania that had 350 people in it, went to school in a three-room brick schoolhouse. And I had friends who quit school in the 9th, 10th, 11th grade, and they couldn't pass a GED, you know, let alone what they call a RAZA (phonetic) test to qualify into our maintenance programs.

But the thing about education and apprenticeships is very important. There's a society out there that they need to know that you can make a very good living with a skilled trade. You know, these guys I grew up with, you know, they couldn't pass any of these tests, but they could
fix anything, you know, and life experience has been overlooked.

And, you know, sometimes it doesn't count for anything, but we need to get people involved in the trades again because no matter how much automation we have, there's still going to be equipment that needs repair, and you need the people that have the skills to do that.

But the statement with the college degree, you know, they come out of college, they got $100,000 in student loans, and, you know, it was pushed for the last 30 years get a degree, get a degree, get into business, and the trades fell by the wayside. So, they're coming out of college, they're making $30,000 a year, and they got $100,000 in college debt.

So, we need to reach out somehow and get people interested in the trades again. Not everybody wants to get their hands dirty, not everybody wants to work midnights, and things like that, but the standard of living can be raised a lot across the country by getting people who have the mechanical skills.

You know, mechanical ability sometimes there's no way to test that. You can test aptitude on paper, but
mechanical aptitude is something that's demonstrated more than, you know, something on paper. So, you can be an electrician, but if you don't have the skills, you're really not. You should not be an electrician by trade or title, and have all that.

So, you know, what we're talking about here is like a massive kind of approach, but, you know, we need to get this society interested in the trades again, and what it takes to keep businesses running.

You know, profit is -- profit became a dirty word in some ways, and it's okay to make profit, it's how they do it, and how they treat their workers. And, you know, as Mr. Attig said, you know, you're paying a welder $9 an hour when his skills in the right industry are worth $30, but they need that opportunity and exposure to those opportunities so that they can take advantage of them. There's a vast underused element of society out there that we need to tap into. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: Thank you. Ms. Hill.

MS. HILL: I just wanted to mention a couple of things, one of which is we clearly need to keep the jobs here. We need to make sure that we, you know, can continue
to make things here, especially where, you know, the cutting edge technologies are concerned.

Companies that got the 2017 tax cuts did not increase their research and development. We know products come from research and development. They're not investing in their own companies. They're sending that profit to shareholders and CEO pay, and that needs to change.

The other thing, and, you know, if we invest in these things like electric buses, climate change, you know, things we need for climate change, then we will have jobs in the future. We will have -- and that needs to be invested in. That's really incredibly important.

It's just a lack of investment. Companies are not investing in these jobs period. It's not just the R&D, it's things like we wouldn't have the level of disability that we have from either age, or just strictly disability, if companies would actually make things ergonomically.

And I can remember that there were a couple of folks that I talked to where there was a very heavy door, and multiple people were getting shoulder -- were getting tears in their shoulders because of these heavy doors. The companies are not investing in ergonomics, why should they,
when they can get workers, and they don't really care if they're disabled. That was the other point that I wanted to make.

And things like if you look at hospitals, they can invest in patient lifting equipment. Instead, they prefer to have their LPNs have back issues rather than investing in equipment to make the jobs easier.

I would also like to mention that we -- you know, of course, as I said, we need to have the labor rights there, and, you know, the issue of ageism, as I said early, really needs to be developed in terms of, you know, whether it's -- we develop some sort of program for encouraging employers to hire older workers. I would really like to see something like that.

And I said, just making jobs less physical, and making jobs easier, and that would require investment by companies. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: Thank you. Ms. Swenor?

MS. SWENOR: Hi, yes. Thank you. I want to first echo that sentiment that's been said that, you know, a college degree certainly should not be a requirement for every position, and to deeply consider the inequity that that
creates, and thank you to Will for sharing that personal story.

You know, higher education is not equitably accessed by everyone. People with disabilities are half as likely to have a college degree. About 19 percent of undergraduates in this country identify having a disability, but only a third of those graduate from college eight years later, a third.

There are deeply unaddressed inequities in higher education for people with disabilities. I work in higher ed, gone through higher ed with a disability. I clawed my way through. I still face it in my job everyday.

It is a problem and a barrier that absolutely impacts the work force, and needs to be addressed system wide, quite honestly. It is, again, a reflection of how society views people with disabilities. It is the ableism, a lack of universal design, knowledge of accommodation, and, honestly, misunderstanding that disability rights are a shared responsibility. But it's an important component to, I think, the discussion we're having.

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: Thank you very much. Mr., I pronounced your name correct the first time, Enayati.
MR. ENAYATI: Yes, thank you. And don't worry, it took me a full year of first grade to try to get that down.

So, I have a couple of points. I'll turn it towards our discussion on skilled trades, and it makes sense why we’ve been talking about the skilled trades. There's a whole other very large section of the U.S. work force that does not have a college degree, and is also not in the skilled trades, but that would be affected by trade policy.

One potential option here to support these individuals because I think they're also affected by, I would call, companies unnecessarily requiring college degrees. So, for example, if you are in book sale -- so, like I know someone who is in sales for, what is it, these scholastic books that they sell to schools, and he had a degree in agricultural science, nothing to do with sales, communications, or teaching, but they required a college degree for him to be in that role when it was functionally just a sales role.

And, so, the question is how can we break that disconnect because there's some part of the explanation for why economists have historically advocated for workers going into a higher education is because we think that it gives
them more skills so they can get a higher paying job, but the reality is that employers are using college degrees as screening devices to identify worker traits that they think are going to be productive in their setting.

So, for example, they might assume that if you have a college degree, you're a harder worker, or you're dedicated enough to stick with a task for a long period of time because you jumped through the hoops of going to college.

I think a college degree is a very poor tool to identify those worker traits. There are current initiatives at the Department of Labor where they're looking into what are called micro credentials, and these are tools that can be used by individuals in, let's say, the service sector.

If you're the wait staff at a restaurant, they can -- what they're doing is they're embedding with the payroll company data to show who is showing up to their shifts on time. You also see who's bringing in the largest tips. All of this stuff are credentials that then go to that individual to say I am a dedicated worker, I bring an extra value to the firm because you can see that through the higher tips that I make.

And, so there are avenues that I think you could
pack into these other initiatives that align with these
goals, and then support these workers that are disadvantaged.

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: Thank you very much, Mr.

Enayati. All right. Commissioner Johanson, did you want
to --

COMMISSIONER JOHANSON: Yeah, I had a question, and
I appreciate you all sticking around, I know it's been a long
afternoon, but this is all very interesting.

You've also talked about different programs for
training, and I was wondering if any of you are familiar with
any state retraining programs, and I ask this because state
retraining programs could possibly serve as models for new
federal ones.

Also, Mr. Attig, are you -- could you please
discuss any specific retraining programs designed for
veterans.

MR. ATTIG: Sorry. I think that you called on me,
and I've got a weird last name to say it. When it comes to
retraining specifically for job loss, I don't believe that I
know of any at this moment.

When it comes to the national level, I do know when
you look into state -- (Technical Interference) when it comes
to we owe a dollar, work for a spell, Dollars from the State (phonetic), do some of that, but we do have trade programs, programs to retrain veterans when they come out of the military and need a different industry whether it's building trades, utilities, that we can expand.

So, I don't think that we have any directly. Our veterans are just members of the population when we come home. Unless we make something specifically for them, they're just a regular civilian with this big bag on their shoulders from the military.

I'm sorry if that didn't answer your question completely, but we have a lot of training programs right now in utilizing -- just like what I went through, which is called Helens to Hard Hats. It takes that veteran, goes through the program, use them before you leave the military, which is very similar to changing a career, right. If you're leaving a steel plant, and we are going to transition you into another occupation, before you lose that job, we should be preparing you for that next job ahead of you.

So, what we do is we train our veterans 180 days out before they leave the military. The day they leave they walk into a skilled trade job that's paying a very high level
of wages.

And, I think, to a point that was just mentioned from the last speaker, when we talk about all of these issues, we're talking about many different agencies, and areas that have to be looked at.

Just like the work I do in Work Force Development for the veterans community in general, one of the biggest things we're trying to do is break down the siloing between the agencies. I think that's something we've heard a lot of on this conversation of how the different agencies do not talk to each other, or the state government versus the federal government.

COMMISSIONER JOHANSON: Thank you, Mr. Attig. One reason I brought this up is that I have a member of my staff at the International Trade Commission who is a veteran who is actually in a federal program to help place veterans in different federal agencies. So, I just wondered how that would work out.

With the federal government, is the federal government actually contacting private industries and seeing if they can work to retrain -- if the government can retrain people for jobs in specific industries? How does that work?
MR. ATTIG: They are, and when you look at right now we're actually working on a work force development on a task force for -- with the Administration on Truckey (phonetic).

So, what you have to do is you have to work on kind of like, again, with the last speaker when you look at the credential matching, and going beyond just what may be on your resume it was on say your DD214 (phonetic) leave the military. There's tons of other credentials and training that American workers go through, whether you're a veteran or not, that can be used for that next job, that next appointment.

The deal with vets, with the DoD, we use a couple of different programs. There's a couple different ones that are used to look at work credentials the military has and then the placement when they -- when you leave.

But again, you have to have the skills matching. You have to have that match between the credentials that that service member has as a leave or a veteran has and then the good jobs. And that's where we see our biggest problem is that we can train a veteran, but if we send them to do a job it doesn't give them the stability and the equity that they
deserve, it's as hard sell. I don't know, again, if that answers the question 100 percent.

COMMISSIONER JOHANSON: Yeah, it does. It does. And again, talking to veterans who work the FTC, it is very hard for them to make the transition often from the military to other parts of the economy. So I appreciate the efforts you all are making.

And to the extent of my question of other people on the panel, are any of you familiar with state programs which can service a model for possibly federal programs? I know the TAA has been discussed at some length today, but are there other possible programs out there which could be creative?

Yeah, I saw Mr. Boone.

MR. BOONE: Yeah, I don't know if it -- this program is still in effect because I've been away from it for awhile but, you know, while with TAA, TRA, TIA there was another program called WIA, Workforce Investment Act. And that also -- and they worked on that at the state level, but unfortunately I'm not versed enough to know whether it's still in process or not. But no matter what they're doing I feel that states could do more. States could do more and

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they need to invest in their people and we could raise up everybody's standard of living.

And if we're going to transfer to a green economy, the training you get is going to be important because things are always going to break, okay. Electric cars, the people make money they sell them, but who's going to fix them when they break? Where is the training for that? The solar panels, you know, the fact that that's all going to need maintenance. Windmills. You know, that would be a boon for steelworkers. But they're going to break and they need people trained.

There's all these jobs that are potentially out there where people can make a very good standard of living, but they need access to education and training because things are going to continue to break. It's just a fact of manufacturing, you know.

COMMISSIONER JOHANSON: All right. Thank you.

Mr. Attig, you wanted to add something?

MR. ATTIG: Right. As I was going through my Rolodex I was trying to remember, but right now again with the trucking we had examples from Illinois where we're working on -- working on state licensing and credentialing
that doesn't match up with federal and national credentials.

Right.

So in many industries there's state and local credentials that are needed to apply for jobs or working industry, whether it's truck driving, teaching, things like that.

What we're working to try and do is when we -- when a service member leaves the military, we can work with those state governments to create the credential matches so that when they go back home they don't have to go through that entire process again because many times we find when veterans move -- when American workers move they find themselves up against credential matching because it's at the state level. So I think there needs to be more looking -- or look into state credentials versus the federal credentials as an overall.

COMMISSIONER JOHANSON: Okay. Thank you. And Mr. Boone, to get back to your comments earlier on retraining, just to let you know, at our prior roundtables we've heard from a number of community college representatives and it seems like they're certainly moving -- they're certainly working in that direction for retraining -- or training for
the new economy. I live in Virginia and I know the community colleges here are very active in that area.

MR. BOONE: Well, if I could add, you know, when you mentioned community colleges, the steelworkers have a program called Steelworkers for the Future and there's three different community colleges that are now preparing people to enter into that. It's a two-year program. It comes with -- with two on-the-job training programs. They pay them to do this while they're at work. Like in the military they could work -- they get paid and basically the money they make will pay for the two years of college if they return it that way. But that's one program that is connected with community colleges and it's all about maintenance. It's called Steelworkers for the Future. So there is some movement on that area.

COMMISSIONER JOHANSON: Thank you, Mr. Boone.

And I don't know if others have any comments. If not, we can move on to the -- any other questions there might be from other commissioners. Thank you for your responses.

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: I think that's it. I think Commissioner Schmidtlein and Chair Kearns weren't able to make today's roundtable, but this has been a wonderful
conversation. Huge thank you to all of you for taking the
time to participate, share stories, share the information and
research you're doing. It's mentally (phonetic) important to
what we as International Trade Commission has been asked to
do, which is listen primarily, and then take what we hear and
produce a report and deliver this to the policymakers in
Washington who handle trade.

So thank you again. This has been a very wonderful
cornerstone and everyone, I am -- huge thanks.

MR. ATTIG: Thank you.

MR. BISHOP: Thank you, everyone. Have a great
day.

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: Goodbye.

MR. BOONE: Thank you, everybody. Thank you.

(Whereupon, at 3:53 p.m., the roundtable in the
above-entitled matter concluded.)
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