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GENDER AND ORIENTATION )
ROUNDTABLE )

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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
Chair Jason E. Kearns
Vice Chair Randolph J. StAYin
Commissioner David S. Johanson
Commissioner Rhonda K. Schmidtlein

William R. Bishop, Supervisory Hearings and Information Officer
Tyrell Burch, Management Analyst
Terri Hayes, ASL Interpreter
Lindsay Weishaar, ASL Interpreter

External:

Mary Borrowman, International Center for Research on Women
Jerame Davis, Pride at Work
Latoya Faustine, She Built This City
Oleta Garrett Fitzgerald, Children’s Defense Fund

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External:

JAMAICA GAYLE, National Foreign Trade Council's Global Innovation Forum
ARIA GRABOWSKI, International Center for Research on Women
TAMMY GRAY-STEEL, National Women in Agriculture Association
SHARITA GRUBERG, Center for American Progress
JANET HILL, Steelworker
CHERYL HUSK, Steelworker
KATE JAMES, Oregon Trade Adjustment Assistance
MORGAN MENTZER, Reckoning Trade Project
ANDY MESERVE, Steelworker
ERASMO SANCHEZ HERRERA, NGLCC Global
LINDA SCHMID, Trade in Services International
NORA SPENCER, Hope Renovations
VALARIE WILLIAMS, National Women in Agriculture Association
MR. BISHOP: Commissioner Karpel, I thank you so much. Any questions, chat with me, I'll see it, and I'll respond. I yield the floor. Thank you so much.

Commissioner Karpel? You're on mute.

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: Yes, sorry. Could you stop sharing your screen? I was just waiting for this.

MR. BISHOP: Oh, I'm sorry. Of course I can.

Thank you for reminding me. There we go. Sorry about that.

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: No problem. Well, good afternoon, everyone. My name is Amy Karpel, and I am one of five Commissioners at the U.S. International Trade Commission. I'm excited to welcome you to our fourth 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 gender and orientation, specifically how and why trade may affect women, and LGBTQ workers differently than other workers. I'll be the moderator for today's roundtable. The Agency's Chair, Jason Kearns, Vice Chair Randy Stayin, and Commissioners David Johanson, and Rhonda Schmidtlein are also actively listening, and may ask some questions toward the end of our discussion.

Commission Staff members, Kristin Smith, and...
Camilla Priest (phonetic), Tamara Katchatorian, 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 this 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. Each roundtable will focus on a different category, including by skill, wage, and salary level, race and ethnicity, gender and orientation, and age, disability, and education, especially as they affect under-represented and under-served communities.
At the conclusion of all 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, educators, academics, researchers, advocates, entrepreneurs, and a state government worker. My role today is to ask you questions, and manage the flow of discussion so that everyone has a chance to speak. Your role as a participant 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 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 3:00 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 3:00, so please do not feel obligated to do so.

Please be conscious of the fact that this open to the public and the press. Also, the discussion today is
being transcribed for the record, and a link to this

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,

maybe U.S. confidential.

If you would like to respond to a question, please

use the Webex raised 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 your hand for some reason, just wave your

real hand to 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
de@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 de@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 that 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 from experiences of other workers based on gender, or orientation, and why.

The roundtables are specifically focused on 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 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 due to their gender, or orientation. 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 insight for this study.

I am going to group my questions into three buckets. First, I would like to ask about the type of challenges women and LGBTQ workers are experiencing in the work force, and explore how those differ because of their gender, or orientation.

Second, I'd like to ask about how trade has
impacted women and LGBTQ workers differently, and, third, talk about policies, or programs that could help workers deal with the adverse impacts of trade, or to take advantage of trade opportunities.

If 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 women and LGBTQ workers experience may differ, but I'm still going to ask my questions in a way that invites participants from either perspectives of women, or LGBTQ individuals, or both, to speak on any of the questions, rather than separate the conversation into two parts, in an effort to keep everyone engaged.

So, let's get started. The first question is --

MR. BISHOP: Commissioner Karpel?

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: Yes.

MR. BISHOP: I'm sorry, could I interrupt you for just one second. I neglected to let folks know that we do have closed captioning available for today, so I'm going to let you know that in the bottom left-hand corner, the very, very bottom left-hand corner of your screen, you should see a cc in a little box, and it says when you hover it says show captions, click on that, and it will start to type for you.
I would remind everyone that this is not an official transcript, this is just to assist those who may be in need of it, and I also want to mention quickly, we invite all of our participants, the registered participants for today, to turn your cameras on for us so that we can see you.

All right. Have a great roundtable. Thank you so much, Commissioner Karpel. I apologize.

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: No problem. All right. So, for the first question, what challenges do women and LGBTQ workers experience with respect to finding, or maintaining employment, or earning a living wage? What factors may be at play that make that experience different for women, or LGBTQ workers?

Anyone that's interested -- oh, I see a hand. Ms. Faustin, would you like to kick us off?

MS. FAUSTIN: Yes. Good afternoon. I figured I'd go first because there's so many amazing panelists, let me get one comment in.

My name is LaToya Faustin. I am with She Built This City Work Force Development in Charlotte, North Carolina. I see some fellow North Carolinians on the call. I will speak directly towards some of the impacts we see for women as we are trying to ignite interest in the trades. Childcare, I would say, is one of the biggest issues. I'll narrate one scenario of a participant who got
pregnant during COVID, and, so, there was no childcare available at the time, and we are still not at all capacity for childcare because of numbers concerns, and, so, without being able to navigate quality childcare for both while you are employed, and also while you're looking for employment, continues to be an issue.

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: Thank you. Ms. Grabowski?

MS. GRABOWSKI: Hi, good afternoon. I'm Aria Grabowski, and I'm with the International Center for Research on Women. And in reference to this question, I'll touch base kind of on a broader spectrum looking a little bit beyond just U.S. and globally. I would like to second my previous colleague's comment on childcare, and expand that to care responsibilities more broadly beyond childcare.

We know that household responsibilities frequently keep women out of the work force, along with discrimination and gender-based violence and harassment, and I know at least through some of our preference programs, our being the U.S.'s preferences programs, the clauses for labor rights frequently don't include protection from gender-based violence and harassment even though that is part of the International Labor Organization's recommendations, and part of their labor rights processes.

And, so making sure that those are really included both domestically and globally, and how we're looking at our
trade deals and preference programs as a key part of that, along with addressing some of these factors around care.

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: Okay. Thank you. Ms. Gruberg?

MS. GRUBERG: Thank you so much. So, I can speak to the facts on the LGBTQI+ community as a threshold matter because of the lack of data from the federal government on sexual orientation and gender identity. We don't know really. We are starting at a disadvantage where we don't even have the information necessary to assess how trade is impacting the community.

So, first off, I want to put in a very strong clause for adopting sexual orientation and gender identity data measures alongside other demographic measures that are used to assess these impacts.

I wanted to point to the National Academies for Science and Medicine that just put out a blue ribbon panel report on recommendations for sexual orientation and gender identity data collection.

LGBTQI+ has faced widespread discrimination, particularly in the work force, even with the Supreme Court's decision on Bostock v. Georgia, extending non-discrimination protection over one-third of LGBTQI+ workers [technical interference].

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: I'm sorry, Ms. Gruberg,
you're breaking up a little bit. Can you just -- I think we
just lost -- well, maybe we'll --

MS. GRUBERG: I had to go off.

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: Try going off of video.

Sometimes that does give a little more bandwidth, and --

MR. BISHOP: Yes, I turned off her video.

MS. GRUBERG: Is that any better?

MR. BISHOP: Yes, we can hear --

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: Yeah, I can hear you now, so

-- yeah.

MS. GRUBERG: Okay. The only thing that even with
recent extension of non-discrimination protections, LGBTQI+
workers still face widespread discrimination, which impacts
hiring, firing, and because 29 states lack protections; there
is very limited labor market mobility for this population.
And, so, if work dries up in a certain place, it's extremely
hard for this population to just go elsewhere for another
job.

We've assessed recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic,
and the recession, and that's another area we find the
recovery of LGBTQI+ workers, particularly those living at the
intersection of LGBTQI+ and disabled workers, LGBTQI+ workers
of color, trans workers, significantly lags behind the rest
of the population. And, so, anytime we're talking about
changes to work opportunities, this is the population that is
very significantly impacted, and if thought is not put into how this is going to impact the population, this is a group that is consistently left behind.

And, so, I wanted to just add a plug to ensuring that our trade agreements are inclusive of labor rights, which includes protections for LGBTQI+ workers to kind of minimize some of these effects. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: Okay. Thank you for that. Just a quick follow-up. So, in terms of is it discrimination that's driving that, or is there sort of another layer down in terms of access to resources that is also employment discrimination, but is there another layer down that it's access to resources is also at issue?

MS. GRUBERG: It seems like both, and, so, the discrimination piece really limits comfort-seeking employment elsewhere, opportunities elsewhere, but whenever we have kind of a scarcity situation, that does link very closely to increased reports of discrimination, or increased experiences of discrimination. Does that answer your question?

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: Yeah, yeah, and maybe I'll circle back to you. Let me hear from a few more folks. Let's see, I've lost track of who was next. Why don't we start with Ms. Fitzgerald.

MS. GARRETT FITZGERALD: Hi, and thank you very much for inviting me to this conversation. I was just going
to offer that we do a lot of work with rural -- in rural communities with black women, and young women, and what we struggle with -- and we're doing this work in Alabama, Georgia, and Mississippi. What we're struggling with is the loss of manufacturing, and textile, and all of those kinds of jobs that left after trade policies were put in place back in the 90's, and nothing has come back.

So, that factor has had a tremendous impact on those communities with unemployment reaching as high as 25 percent among black women in some of those areas. So, we are very much interested in this conversation, and how we can set that straight.

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: All right. Thank you. Mr. Davis, would you like to go next?

MR. DAVIS: Yes, thank you. I wanted to add to Sharita's comments about the LGBTQI+ community. First of all, a big plus one on the data collection issue that we have. We really don't know where we are on a lot of things because the data simply isn't there.

But, you know, as Sharita was talking about with the increased discrimination that LGBTQI+ people experience, Sharita was talking about how difficult it is to move to other jobs, so, you know, insofar as trade drives things like consolidation, that can have an impact on the LGBTQI+ community because it does dry up a number of job
opportunities available to us in our particular field.

The other impact that could be possible is insofar as the trade deal could impact tax revenue as LGBTQI+ people are facing disproportionate discrimination, that also means that they're more likely to be seeking government services, and if those aren't properly funded, that can also have an impact on our community.

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: And in terms of consolidation, you mean -- could you elaborate on that a bit more?

MR. DAVIS: Yeah, like corporate consolidation insofar as, you know, it drives whether that's increased revenue to make it more possible to buy smaller companies, or if it dries up competition in an area.

And, so, you know, for example, if there's consolidation in a field that someone is working in, they could potentially not be able to switch jobs because there's only one or two employers now because of consolidation that could potentially be driven by something in the trade deal.


MS. HILL: Thank you. I'm a steelworker. I'm a member of the Steelworkers Union, and a member of the Coalition of Labor Union Women, and I live in a community that was greatly impacted by trade in the 80's, and you can
still see when the shutdown of the big steel plants was --
you know, there were not as many women who worked there, but
you can still see that the women that did work there had good
paying jobs, and certainly that has impacted them even into
retirement because they -- once these plants closed down,
they were unable to get jobs in the area that paid as much.

And you can see that going through today with other
plants shutting down due to trade, I mean, it really is
usually helpful to provide supports, monetary supports, for
retraining, monetary supports for healthcare because they
frequently lose their healthcare. It's very, very important
to make sure that those opportunities are there, and that
those opportunities also continue for a while so that they
can get retrained.

And I will also say it's not just -- women are
affected in another way as well because when the -- you know,
if they are, you know, married, and their spouse loses a job,
they're affected not so much by -- you know, they didn't lose
the job, but the family is affected. This can result in an
increase in domestic violence because of having to find a new
job.

It can result in, you know, additional strain on
the family. Families having to forego opportunities that
they would have had had they remained employed, these plants
stayed in business, such as college, you know, going to other
schools. There's just very long-lasting effects from any shutdown on a community, and on a family, that we should really try to make sure that there's some kind of supports there.

It's not going to replace it, but especially if you have a plant that's in a rural area where there's few opportunities. I mean, and it's often hard too because people have families that it's very hard for them to move away from their families to find other job opportunities.

So, I would just suggest that we have a great number of supports for people there. And the people that I know who have taken advantage of these supports, it's made a huge difference in their lives. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: Thank you. And do you think these challenges, or concerns you've raised, are they more pronounced for women maybe because there's disproportionate responsibility for family issues, or what is your perspective on that?

MS. HILL: Because of their disproportionate responsibility for family issues, but also if they're in a job where they're in some sort of job that would get shut down due to trade, it's very likely that they might have had a harder time getting into that job than a man would, and that they might actually then have a harder time finding a job afterwards in another facility that is similar to that.
So, discrimination does play a role in that because, you know, they've decided -- you know, we already know that if two people with the same resume, one is female and one isn't, they're probably less likely to be employed in a manufacturing job.

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: All right. Thank you very much. Dr. Borrowman, would you like to speak next?

DR. BORROWMAN: Yes, thank you so much. I am joining my colleague, Aria Grabowski, from the International Center for Research on Women, and I'm an economist, so I'm going to be speaking today kind of from that lens just as a framing.

So, the first thing I wanted to bring up was just thinking about the overall structure of the labor market, right, there's just really prevalent occupational segregation. We know that that then in turn like really influences outcomes for trade, right, because sectors expand and contract; it definitely is going to impact women in different ways because occupations tend to be, you know, more dominated, you know, in certain occupations by women, usually valued at the lower extent in terms of wages and benefits in that as well.

And this is intersectional, right. We see that there's the same patterns of segregation in labor markets by race and ethnicity as well.
And, so, thinking about these impacts then, you know, no matter what happens with trade, there's going to be different impacts by gender because of the structure of the labor market.

And, so, in economics they always talk about this thing about compensating losers in trade, right, that there are going to be gains, and winners and losers from trade, but this piece of compensating losers, I think, isn't often taken seriously enough, and especially along these gender lines, right.

Aria and I work globally, but this is true in the U.S. as well, right, thinking about if there are going to be these impacts, particularly for those that have the most disadvantage in the labor market already, how are you really taking this seriously, and that's in Janet's really great comments.

I think there's, you know, these things that shape occupational segregation, right, and that's discrimination. That's what Aria and others talked about in terms of care responsibilities. That's also things like leave policies, right, in the U.S., are they providing paid leave for workers both for care, you know, maternity leave, and also other caring responsibilities.

And, so these all come into play in terms of really shaping the landscape of how trade policies are going to play
out on a macro scale.

And plus one, plus ones, my other colleagues' comments on data collection for LGBTQ communities, we really need this. This is a huge thing in terms of understanding impacts, but what we do know is poverty rates, and we can see that those are dramatically higher, right, in terms of what we can look at.

And this speaks to your question of is this labor markets, or is this barter resources, and, I think, we can say that it's cumulative, right, the same way that gender discrimination, and those impacts, are cumulative. And it impacts from, you know, education, and into labor markets, in different areas of life, that's true, but LGBTQ communities, right, discrimination, plus access to health resources, you know, all these different things kind of compile over time to shape poverty rates, and impacts down the line.

And, so that's kind of hoping here to like lay out the landscape of how we can create a context for how these factors come into play with trade policies in the labor market. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: Thank you. I appreciate that. Who's next? Let me see. Ms. James, did you have a comment?

MS. JAMES: Yeah, sure, I'll contribute. I'm Kate James with the Oregon Trade Adjustment Assistance for Workers
Program. Oregon is a very large state on the map with mostly rural communities. When trade impacts a worker group in rural Oregon, it's hard for those workers to find living wage employment without additional barriers such as commute distance.

For women, or LGBTQ workers, they often have additional barriers as we've heard, such as daycare, and commute distance. In Oregon 50 percent of childcare closed during COVID, and never reopened.

We've also heard that when filling out paperwork, some LGBTQ people may fear listing partners as income support due to fear of discrimination. Some may not feel safe with this.

Also, gender expression could be a hindering factor in getting a job for some. Say, they're non-binary, and do not look like one of the two customary genders, or appear female, but go by a male name. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: Thank you. Ms. Faustin?

MR. FAUSTIN: Thank you. I wanted to add some additional context to some of the conversations around the manufacturing needs in certain communities, and I found it very interesting because here in the Charlotte area, Mecklenburg County, we have an abundance of advanced manufacturing jobs, but no one to fill them, and, so I wanted to note about the changing dynamic of manufacturing and the
use of technology in this space, and the need for robotics, and other coding components within training that could be very beneficial, and how technology could potentially bridge the gaps from areas where there may be a plethora of workers with manufacturing experience, but not the jobs in a place like where we are, who has the jobs, but no people, and what technology could do to help bridge that gap.

I wanted to highlight a program. I think, sometimes when we think about the work force space, we can look at it in isolation, or sometimes we have to, but also housing needs. There's a program here in Mecklenburg County called Mech Success. It is very early and young, but for an individual, particularly women, who are looking for employment, if they're in a trade -- a training program, they'll get up to four months of their rent paid for so that they can look for the training that they need.

And, so, just highlighting partnerships, they don't just work on the skills, but also the other components of life like mortgage and rent payments that could help alleviate some of the concerns from about transitioning to a field that you may not be as familiar with.

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: Thank you. I appreciate that. Oh, another hand has gone up. Ms. Mentzer?

MS. MENTZER: Thank you, Ms. Mentzer. My name is Morgan Mentzer, and I'm with the Reckoning Trade Project. We
do LGBTQ trade worker organizing, and I would say most what
we're seeing are issues with discrimination, especially for
transgender non-binary folks, and often folks don't know even
how to talk to their employer about it. Employers don't have
model policies to implement, or even know where to go.

And, I think, something we're really seeing is
providing employers with policies, model policies that say
this is what to do, this is how to protect someone's gender
identity, this is how to create a safe work space, and a way
to send employers to here are some resources to start this
conversation.

Also, of course, in the benefits we see a lot of
benefits that do not include gender-affirming care, so, if
someone is transgender, and they need to get access to
testosterone, whether or not that's paid for.

Also, in the leave policies, non-traditional
facilities are always something that a lot of our
constituents deal with of, you know, my partner and I, I'm
not married to them, and I need to be able to stay home and
take care of them. Or adoption issues, or caring for family
members, children of family members in a foster care
situation.

So, we're seeing a lot of kind of the
non-traditional experiences that our folks face are not being
reflected in policies, and employers don't really know what
to do, and then that leaves the workers to often educate the
employers, which opens them up to outing themselves, which
many employees don't want to out themselves, especially if
they're in a labor market that is, you know, not -- if this
is the main job that is available, they're not going to risk
outing themselves often to facing discrimination.

So, another thing we're really hearing a lot of is
a need for mentorship. So, as an organization, we're working
to build a mentorship program, but really finding a way to
connect folks that are isolated, specifically
under-represented in the trades, how do they navigate these
issues of discrimination, how do they talk to their
supervisor about coming out, how do they talk to people about
what pronoun that should be respected.

So, I would say -- oh, and I really want to say
that the need for data, we need data about LGBTQ folks. It's
critical; it will really help us. When we present to
employers about this is an issue, they say why, we don't see
any LGBTQ workers. Well, we're here, we're working. So, I'd
say the data is also very critical. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: Thank you. And I'll call on
the next speakers. We have Ms. Fitzgerald, and then Dr.
Gray-Steele.

But I would throw out there, I am curious about
this data question, and we will be doing a symposium with
researchers later as part of this study to sort of really
drill down onto that data issue. But I am curious of those
on this call today if you could give a little more on the
type of data, that would be helpful. Is it just basic
employment data, or is it another layer, or two, or three
down? Thank you.

    So, I think we'll go to, who is next, Ms.
    Fitzgerald.

    MS. GARRETT FITZGERALD: Thanks. I just wanted to
go back to something Ms. Faustin brought up about technology,
and bridging training.

    In the areas where we are technology is obviously
also a problem that we hope will be addressed with resources
that are coming down from the infrastructure legislation, and
monies from Commerce. And that would be critical both for
job training, and for education since we also don't have
teachers in every school in content areas, and particularly
in the STEM area.

    There's really a need for a larger vision, and
greater thinking about how to address these parts of our
country that lack economic opportunity. That is a crosswalk
between labor, the Department of Human Services, Health and
Human Services, and the Department of Education.

    Because there are resources in each one of those
places that don't feed upon itself, in these areas where
people have talked about where you have a lack of transportation, a lack of childcare, there are programs that exist that marry projects between the Department of Human Services, which can pay for childcare and transportation, with the work force training part of things, but we need more of that.

We also need more -- when we talk about technology, I think we also need for work force people to understand that the economy is going somewhere where we are not preparing to go. A lot of our work force training dollars is retraining people in manufacturing jobs, or jobs that already exist. It is not futuristic. It doesn't look at, you know, where -- what we can do around economy and technology.

So, we need a larger vision, and we also need to look at where we have resources in all of these agencies, and make sure that as they are used, they are used to lift people up, and out of poverty, and into jobs that will last them a lifetime. So, I just wanted to lift that up as well.

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

MS. GAYLE: Yes, good afternoon. My name is Jamaica Gayle. I work for an organization called the Global Innovation Forum, and our goal is to elevate small business forces to help foster an inclusive policy landscape.

So, in my position, I have the pleasure of speaking
regularly with a lot of women entrepreneurs about their experiences in trade, so their challenges, opportunities, experience, et cetera. So, I just want to comment briefly on women business owners, and women as traders, and as exporters.

So, I think, in addition to all the barriers, more gender specific barriers that we’ve mentioned so far, like discrimination, and the gap in unpaid housework, I think many of the challenges that women-owned businesses experience are not so different from a lot of other small and medium-sized businesses, but the challenges that they face are just more intensified for women.

So, women-owned businesses can experience higher trade barriers such as like difficulties with complying with regulatory and procedural requirements in trade, so, the cost and complexities of international rules and regulations, lack of network, or mentorship, lack of access to information, and lack of access to like digital tools, or the digital skills that are needed to use digital skills.

I think the digital piece we’re seeing is so important, especially as the world goes more and more online, everything is being online (phonetic), and just kind of access to those tools, and the accompanying skills needed to access kind of the opportunities that can then connect you with trade, and just kind of a world of opportunity in terms
of just finding customers anywhere. But, I'll stop there.
Thank you.

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: Thank you. Who is next? I think Dr. Gray-Steele, did you have a comment?
DR. GRAY-STEELE: No.

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: Sorry. I think we'll move onto Dr. Borrowman. Why don't we go to you?
DR. BORROWMAN: Thank you. I'm just jumping back in on that data piece to say, first off, to start with a comment briefly about gender data, and just the need for that as well, especially as we think about kind of globally just putting in a plug there for thinking about more and better quality gender data, especially that's beginning to go beyond the binary, right, in terms of collecting that type of data of gender identity. But also in terms of impact assessments, right, in terms of ex-post and ex-ante impact assessments of trade policies. I think that's a really key piece of data we could collect.

But beyond that, I think within the LGBTQI data, there's much that we -- there's kind of like the dream wish list I'm sure that many of us here could come up with in terms of that type of data, but especially, you know, really detailed occupational and sectoral data that we can as researchers, and advocates, conduct analyses, coupled with wage data, other information about benefits, demographics,
access to services, and these are the types of things that we can start to put together so that we can have the information there, as I said, to conduct analyses, and also to really inform our advocacy.

But we'd love to also hear from others on the call who are engaged in this so we can all start to work together in our advocacy for better data going forward.

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: Thank you. I think I could ask some follow-ups. I guess I'm -- I wanted -- oh, before I do, Ms. Mentzer, so, why don't you go ahead.

MS. MENTZER: Thank you. I was going to just pipe in quickly about the data. I would say absolutely data about people who identify as trans, non-binary, gender diverse, also the data about how -- I just lost it. Discrimination, and how discrimination is happening to many folks.

We're seeing in our practice that, for example, if someone enters the trades as the gender they were assigned at birth, but then they transition while employed, they often will lose employment at that point. So, it will -- we see it as a need for data about what the discrimination looks like, how it's really happening, and on relationships being able to report to supervisors, if possible. What does your supervisor say when you do report discrimination?

But early on just how many folks identify as lesbian, gay, queer, and then how many folks identify as
transgender, gender diverse, and inter sexes, would be really helpful to us.

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: Thank you. Okay. So, I'm going to -- I'm going to move to the next question, which is a little more trade-focused. But I encourage everyone to speak to the first question if something in the conversation sparks an idea, or perspective you want to share. Please don't feel that we're sort of in these blocks of particular questions that we have to stick to.

So, the second question is how has trade impacted women and LGBTQ workers, and have the impacts differed based on their gender orientation, and, if so, why?

I think we talked a little bit, as I said, earlier, but the questions blur a bit together, and, so we talk about impacts of trade really could be, you know, job transition, or it could be new opportunities, or it could be a new business opening up, or a business closing. And, so, to the extent that maybe trade isn't your focus of your work, but those types of transitions or changes are, that is immensely useful to what we're studying.

I see Ms. Husk, you're hand is up, so why don't you please go ahead.

MS. HUSK: I just want to speak to my personal experience. I'm with the United Steelworkers in Kentucky. I worked at a primary aluminum smelter in 2015 whenever
aluminum really took a downturn because of trade laws, and
some things that were going on at that time. We went from
employing about 550 steelworkers down to about 180. Before
we had about 30 women in the plant. Today we have
approximately 12 or 13. Even though we've hired back to
about 430 people at this time, we still have super low
numbers of women.

I think part of that is because to save money there
were several jobs that were combined, which made them very
much physically harder, so women have a hard time coming into
these jobs. A lot of the women when the jobs were combined
they were forced out of some of the jobs they were in back
into harder jobs. And, so it forced a lot of ladies to take
early retirement, to move on, and to go into other things.

I say we're a pretty tight knit group, and most of
the ladies that I know of they've wound up having to take
lower paying jobs, like some of them have been forced into
early retirement, which we have a pension, but that reduced,
you know, what they would draw on their pension because it
was an early retirement situation.

So, like I said, trade in our plant here locally,
you know, dramatically, dramatically, in my opinion, affected
the women in the plants.

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: Okay. And in terms of
getting employment in the plant, was that a harder route for
them than maybe their male counterparts, or how was that --
how has that experience been for you and the people you work
with?

MS. HUSK: I'd say yes. I hired in in the early
90's, and at that time there was very few women in the plant,
and they had made a push to hire women. Most want to remain
in the plant, got 20-plus years, we were all hired in at that
time. Most of the younger women who came in afterwards wound
up getting hit with the layoffs that we had in 2015, and have
not come back.

And now, I've actually spoken to our H.R. because
we're not hiring and keeping women in the plant now. In the
recent two years we've hired probably, I'd say, over 150
people, and very, very few of them have been women, and of
the women that have been hired only one or two have been able
to stay in the plant. Like I said, I think that goes back to
the job combinations, which, you know, I said just creates
more of a physical burden on the people coming into those
entry level jobs.

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: Thank you. Ms. James?

MS. JAMES: Thank you. So, just wanting to
follow-up to Ms. Fitzgerald's point earlier. We just wanted
to mention that the Oregon Trade Program recently received
approval from the Department of Labor for a two-year
technology pilot for under-served populations.
In the TAA program we're usually unable to pay for any technology needs unless a worker is approved for occupational training. In this pilot we reach out to under-served populations affected by TAA, and can assist in providing technology, including laptops, and internet access. Also basic computer skills right upfront.

So, this program provides equal access to begin to receive services, and additional barrier removal that they might need. And this is a brand new pilot that we've just started, and we're very excited about it.

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: Thank you. Anyone else? I think one of the issues was raised earlier, but given that an impact of trade can be a job transition, I wondered if any of the participants could speak more to access to resources that may aid in that transition, or that have been missing that would be needed for a smoother transition for situations perhaps where there has been a need to switch jobs, or a job loss? Ms. Williams?

MS. WILLIAMS: Hi, my name is Ada'Zane. I'm actually here representing Dr. Steele with an NWIAA organization, which is the National Women in Agriculture organization.

One of the things that we've discussed, and, I believe, she'll be on a little bit later, but one of the things that we've discussed as far as black women in
agriculture is the difficulty of getting federal funding. They've been sort of through the USDA just sort of edged out of a lot of funding, which has made it a little bit difficult for them to expand their farmlands, and produce.

And I've recently spoke with a farmer here the other day in South Carolina, I was actually there, he has about 4,000 acres, but he was saying also that the money that they're not able to get, you know, to expand, you know, to harvest crops, they're missing a quarter where, you know, they can't get their crops up, they can't plant. So, that's definitely affecting the agriculture trade as far as black women getting agricultural funds.

And we've also discussed, and where me and Tammy, Dr. Steele, how we collaborate, as well as discrimination with immigrant women, and that's what I'm working on with Smart Pathways Immigration Services here in Atlanta, which is listening to a lot of immigrant women come in and talk about, you know, the discrimination that they face on their job, but a lot of them don't even understand that they're being discriminated against because the countries that they've come from certain practices, cultural practices, are accepted that are not accepted here.

So, our company is providing training to help them understand what those discriminatory practices look like, and that they have a right to speak against that as well, but as
it comes to representing Dr. Steele with her organization is
they are really having a difficulty time getting funding for
their farms.

And even the immigrants that are in agriculture,
you're having an even more difficult time with
discrimination, the women, with getting funds, and being able
to participate in that work force. So, we're definitely
building programs, and writing curriculum so that we can
teach them how to do those things.

When we talk about discrimination with women,
discrimination with immigrant women is definitely a little
bit more acute because a lot of them don't know that, and
you're more accepting, or because it's so hard for them to
get into the work force, they don't, you know, make a fuss
out of it, you know, they don't try to draw attention
because, you know, it's hard enough for them to get in.
There could be educational barriers, language barriers.

So, we're definitely getting in at a grassroots
level here in Atlanta to help, you know, train immigrant
women, and especially black women in agriculture how to, you
know, get involved in the work force, and, you know, provide
funding for their trade.

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: Thank you. Just a quick
follow-up. So, is childcare, or transportation, are those
issues as well that you are working with it on?
MS. WILLIAMS: Transportation in the areas that the black women in agriculture it is in the rural area, so transportation has not been raised as a, you know, primary issue, or childcare. It's basically, you know, getting access to funds to, you know, move on with their businesses.

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: Okay. All right. Thank you. Ms. Spencer?

MS. SPENCER: Hi, good afternoon. I'm Nora Spencer, and I'm with Hope Renovations. We are in North Carolina, and we're a pre-apprenticeship program. We train women for jobs in the trades, and, of course, the construction trades being very male-dominated, there is a lot of opportunity for women.

But, I think, one thing that we have found -- you know, I know that there are a lot of different reasons why building material costs have gone up so much in the past year, year and a-half, but, I think, you know, there were some trade policies, particularly in the last year that, you know, drove up the price of lumber, and the price of steel, and what we have found is that, of course, in this industry is that if those costs can't be absorbed by what you charge the customer, they have to be absorbed in the bottom line.

And we've had conversations -- because a big part of what we do is helping women get entry level jobs and apprenticeships. We've had conversations with builders who

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have said, you know, we love what you're doing, we'd love to bring some of the women in your program onto our team, but we have to focus our dollars right now on more experienced folks in order to, you know, maintain profit, and cut costs.

So, I think it's kind of like a downstream effect for women in an industry where traditionally, you know, we haven't had a seat, and we're trying to bridge that gap with training, but unless someone has, you know, a decent amount of experience, they're not necessarily going to be welcomed into those other jobs because of the costs of training them.

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: Thank you. Ms. Gruberg.

MS. GRUBERG: Thank you. So, what we've seen all too often is publicly funded work force initiatives don't actually result in significant earnings gains for workers, and for LGBTQI+ workers that's in large part because these initiatives don't account for the issues of discrimination, occupational segregation, and the economic disparities as we discussed earlier, and sexual disparities that prevent LGBTQI+ workers from accessing training opportunities.

One of the reasons for this is that these programs are usually created by statutory language that point to individuals with barriers to employment, or similar terms, and don't explicitly include women, or LGBTQI+ workers, or folks living at the intersection of other identities.

And so, for us, one of the things that we really
would love to see more of is the government taking advantage of the significant regulatory administrative authorities that they have over these kinds of funding programs to explicitly state that these are communities that they intend to be included, and targeted in these work force training opportunities.

Alongside that, we really hope to see that these programs include clear requirements, ongoing monitoring, and partnerships with community and worker organizations to ensure that these programs are attracting, and retaining LGBTQI+ workers.

Those are just a couple of the top line recommendations around improving quality of training and apprenticeship programs.

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: Thank you. I appreciate that and hope to talk more too about -- and, again, we don't have to divide the conversation up this way, but we'll definitely want to circle back to that question about what programs and policies are out there that can help women and LGBTQ workers better take advantage of workforce opportunities or cope with challenges, so definitely want to hear more about those issues as well. But, before we do that, we'll go to Ms. Fitzgerald.

MS. FITZGERALD: Thanks. I wanted to dovetail in on something that Ada and Nora talked about. We work -- I
I don't think I've ever said that I'm with the Southern Rural Black Women's Initiative for Economic and Social Justice. We work in rural areas across the South and we, looking into these communities where no jobs were coming, we started looking at alternative economic development strategies based upon the history of the region and the kinds of jobs that people have, and one of those was a Southern Rural Black Women in Agriculture Cooperative that was formed in Mississippi and has worked with the National Black Women in Agriculture program with Dr. Steele. And that work, you know, started some years ago before COVID, and in that work, there is an issue of access to labor, having labor, having the investments necessary to -- we've been working with USDA programs and others around the kind of equipment and group houses and the kinds of things that women need, focused on vegetable production.

There is an issue of transportation there, but it's not related to the women themselves needing transportation. The issue there is transportation and markets. Being able to identify markets and being able to then get produce from farm to market is an investment problem.

So the whole focus on alternative economic strategies is one that we would really like to have conversations about as a result of what happened with trade and also what happened with trade related to access to food.
during COVID and the conversation that is going on now about how we need to bring our food production back to this country and not rely so heavily on food coming from other places. So that's a great opportunity that could lift up people that have skills, that have access to land, but don't have access to capital.

And then, on what Nora talked about in terms of apprenticeships, some years ago -- and it's an opportunity in the South only when you can find union-based jobs. Some years ago, there was -- they were building automobile manufacturing plants. Toyota built a plant up in northeast Mississippi that was accessible from the Mississippi Delta for women. And we worked with the unions there on an apprenticeship program because they could only do apprenticeships if they had a union job, so -- and that worked out very well. But the Toyota plant wanted to be -- they wanted to be constructed by union labor, but they don't want to unionize the plant. So, if there was a way to extend and expand opportunities for apprenticeship programs, that would work really well, married to the resources that are in these other agencies that could undergird women going to work and staying there until they can get a foothold. I just wanted to lift those up.

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: Appreciate that.

All right. Well, we're getting to our first hour.
mark and I see we have two hands raised, so I think I'll call on Mr. Davis and then Ms. James, and then we can take a short break and certainly welcome continuing this conversation. But let's just take two more comments and then we can all give you a little rest. So, Mr. Davis?

MR. DAVIS: Thank you. I realized that I forgot to introduce myself on my first comment. So hello, everyone, I'm Jerame Davis. I'm the Executive Director of Pride at Work. We represent LGBTQ union members.

So Sharita is saying a lot of my points better than I can, so I just want to, like, reiterate what Sharita said again and specifically point out that TAA should look at the disproportionate impact on LGBTQ people and other populations too. You know, as far as I'm aware, there hasn't ever been TAA that specifically called out the LGBTQ community for specific assistance or kind of looked at it in that way. So I think, you know, with the disproportionate impact of discrimination on the LGBTQ community and the fact that LGBTQ folks tend to concentrate in certain industries and in certain jobs, that TAA should look at that and look at the impact on that community because it can be harder to find a job because, you know, when you experience discrimination as an LGBTQ person, you might be discriminated against at work, you might be discriminated against by losing your job, or you might be discriminated against even getting a job to start
with. So all of those things can definitely have an impact. And I just wanted to reiterate that things like childcare and transportation are also LGBTQ issues as well, and with the disproportionate impact and the disproportionate number of LGBTQ people who live in poverty, transportation, childcare, et cetera, can actually be a pretty big burden.

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: Thank you.

Ms. James?

MS. JAMES: Great, thanks. So, in Oregon, we have a Women in Trades Apprenticeship Program that assists women with pre-apprenticeship so that they can be competitive in the trades that, in the past, it's been difficult for women to get employed in, so, for example, construction, plumbing, electrician. We need more pre-apprenticeship programs that support women and LGBTQ workers.

Also, supporting the reauthorization of the Trade Adjustment Assistance Program is vital in supporting all workers impacted by trade. Our law is clearly written to support all workers, and when reemployment is hard to obtain, we provide retraining for workers. So our program is written to ensure that workers are reemployed in at least 80 percent of the wages they were making at the time of their layoff and equal or higher skill level.

Also, our program here in Oregon is very diverse and includes women and LGBTQ staff so that we represent those
that we serve. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: Thank you very much.

Okay. Well, we'll take a short break, just five minutes. I think Bill can put up a time clock to keep us all on the same page. But just a short break to stretch your legs, and it'll take us to 2, according to my clock, 13 or so. So see you all shortly.

(Whereupon, a brief recess was taken.)

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: All right. Well, thank you. We'll continue this conversation. I want to thank everyone so far for sharing their views. I want to hear from as many of you as possible, so if you haven't spoken already, please chime in. If you have already spoken, I welcome additional views. And even if someone may have said a similar point already, we want to hear all voices. So it's great to have someone chime in and have a similar perspective or similar experience to share. That way, we know it's not just one of the participants but one or more that have that experience.

Great.

Well, thank you, Mr. Meserve, for raising your hand as first off the bat for the second half, so please go ahead.

MR. MESERVE: Hello. My name's Andy Meserve. I'm a steelworker from Kentucky, west Kentucky, and aluminum is a big industry in Kentucky, as well as bourbon, and they're big import/exporters. So, when we have trade issues, I mean,
they really affect our region and kind of hit on a couple of the questions.

Number one, what factors help or hinder? You know, unions I think are the big equalizer for all genders, races, ethnicities, or sexual orientation. All this, you know, I think gives everybody an even playing field. And the best jobs in our area are unionized. I think that's made a huge difference.

The next piece, wages, you know, have steadily increased in our area, and I think that's definitely due to the unionization of these jobs. We have a lot of resources in our area when it comes to trade schools, building trades, apprenticeships, so I think we definitely have access in this region to that, and I think that needs to be a major focus from Washington, D.C., and Frankfort, Kentucky, is access to apprenticeships because those are definitely ways into the middle class that are affordable.

You know, transportation, we're pretty rural here, so there's not public transportation at all. If you don't have a car and willing and able to drive, you're not really able to get to a job.

And then, you know, attendance is a big issue at the plants and the facilities, people I talk to, and that's transportation and healthcare -- or childcare is a big factor that's keeping people from being able to attend work.
regularly and stay out of attendance trouble.

And then I guess I'm going to jump ahead to question three, imports and exports gets back to bourbon and aluminum for us with the tariffs that are put on. So we were hurt -- the bourbon industry was kind of hurt in Kentucky, where the aluminum industry kind of took off. So we had, like, a plus and a minus in our region. But, for the most part, you know, our area is growing and doing pretty good right now.

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: Thank you. And do you -- has your experience been different -- have you seen a different experience between -- you know, you talked about unions and unions being sort of the equalizer. Have you seen that in terms of workers, whether it's male or female workers or LGBTQ or sort of the general population, have you seen it being sort of an equalizer with respect to those kind of workers? Is that what you were referring to or more -- there's something else?

MR. MESERVE: No, absolutely, I think unions are the equalizer. I mean, they keep it fair. They give everybody an equal shot, and I think that that definitely helps in my experience with the facilities that I'm working with.

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: Great. Thank you for sharing that.
Okay. Anyone else?

(No response.)

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: Okay. Well, why don't I take this opportunity to flag the third question, though I think we've already had a bit of discussion about that, but welcome additional thoughts and comments. So it's what policies or programs have been successful in helping workers and women and LGBTQ workers in particular to deal with adverse impacts from trade or to take advantage of trade-related opportunities? Are there ways those policies or programs need to be changed to better address the needs of women or LGBTQ individuals and, if so, how? Are there areas where more or better resources are needed? Okay, Dr. Borrowman, just go ahead.

DR. BORROWMAN: Yeah. I'll just jump in again kind of from a more macro perspective as that's my focus, but just to say, you know, creating binding and enforceable things in trade agreements is something, I think, that's really important for U.S. trade policy going forward on a big level, and that again applies both globally and domestically. And I know within the USMCA that there were some provisions in there relating to protections for gender identity and sexual orientation, and after some back and forth, that was taken out due to some opposition and a footnote was put in that the U.S. didn't have to do any more about that. So I think...
that's just like a level that we can think of at the broadest, is how do we create protections within trade agreements themselves and trade policy to start really helping workers, and not only that they're in there, right, because there's a lot of trade agreements now that often have language around gender, but it's not enforceable at all, and so we really need to think about how we start putting that into place in policy.

And then also back just to the data and kind of impact assessment piece, I think that's a program that can really be beneficial in terms of looking at the impacts before policies are carried out, right, and not just for gender but also in women and for the LGBTQI community. We need a lot more data to do that. But thinking about, you know, putting that into place beforehand, sort of looking at the impacts and then also assessing after the fact to see what actually happened in practice and how that can inform better trade policy going forward in the future. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: Thank you. And just a quick follow-up, in terms of provisions on gender discrimination in trade agreements, recognizing that the agreements are often reflecting what's going on in the partner countries already, I mean, do you see a need to sort of shift certain policies or practices that are in the United States to, for example, fully live up to that kind of an obligation if that were to
be more, you know, hard-hitting in a trade agreement?

DR. BORROWMAN: Just to clarify, are you saying does the U.S. need to do things in their own policy domestically to be able to step up?

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: Right. I mean, trade agreements often memorialize what countries do or feel like they already do, and so, to the extent we're just locking in place maybe current practices in a trade agreement, and we've had a lot of rich discussion today about what challenges and barriers still remain, so I'm sort of curious what in addition you might see, policies and programs that need to change, you know, domestically or in countries to better give expression to that kind of commitment.

DR. BORROWMAN: Yeah. I think that's a great question and obviously would depend on other country contexts. Within the U.S., I mean, obviously, something like maternity leave policies or paid maternity leave is a huge thing and also then expanding those benefits and social protection benefits generally to LGBTQI workers and humans, right, to make sure that they have the same kind of protections in place, and I think that's an area where the U.S. can definitely go further.

In terms of other country contexts, I think that varies, right, who the treaty and agreement is with. I think, you know, for the USMCA, obviously, Canada wanted to
take the language a little bit further than we did and some of those protections just because that's reflective of their kind of foreign policy commitments, and, you know, ICRW is a leader in kind of feminist foreign policy globally and trying to support that. But I think, in other countries, a lot of times it's legal rights, right, even basic things in ILO conventions and making sure that we're supporting those in our trade agreements and the ratification of those, be it ones about decent work or gender-based grounds of harassment in the world of work and again making sure those go beyond just not supporting women workers but also those of all gender identities and sexual orientations. So that's a short answer to probably what could be a very long, long discussion.

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: No, no, no, that's helpful, though.

DR. BORROWMAN: So maybe a starting place anyway.

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: Yeah. No, no, I appreciate that. I appreciate that's a big question.

So, gosh, I've lost a little track of whose hands were up, but I will start with Ms. Schmid. We haven't heard from you today yet, so please go ahead.

MS. SCHMID: Hi, Linda Schmid. I'm with Trade in Services International, and I wanted to focus a little bit on the services economy and also the last question that you
mentioned. In the services economy, 80 percent of workers are employed in the services economy and there are some very high-paying sectors in the services economy, but there are also persistently low-wage sectors: tourism, leisure, hospitality. And I think it's very important for Ambassador Tai to take a look at this persistent low-wage services sector that we have and the fact that in the USMCA we do have language that talks about the fact that the U.S., Canada, and Mexico will cooperate on, for example, promoting labor practices that integrate and retain women in the job market, building capacity skills of women workers, addressing childcare issues, gender-based workplace violence and harassment. So our current USMCA addresses a lot of the things that have been discussed today.

But the issue with USMCA is that everyone is focusing on Mexico. So, when they start executing the provisions of the USMCA, they're going to be looking at Mexico in the sense of, well, Mexico is so far behind, then we don't really need to do anything domestically. So I think it's very important to get the message to Ambassador Tai that when they start looking at how they're executing the labor provisions in the USMCA, that they have to include activities in the United States, you know, as this discussion, I think, which I really appreciate being able to hear all of this because I think it really raises awareness. So I would say
that we have the tools. With a lot of trade agreements, it's a question of implementation.

The other thing that I would mention, and I hope that Ambassador Tai also gets this message, is that the U.N. Conventions on Women's Rights or CEDA, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, which was established in 1979 -- scary -- the U.S. is a signatory to that, but the United States never ratified it. And if you look at CEDA, and many of our trading partners affirm CEDA in their trade agreements, for example, Canada and Chile, if you look at some regional agreements, they will speak to CEDA, but I think it's really time for the United States, and I hope Ambassador Tai, will think about integrating CEDA into our trade agreements as we do our ILO commitments. So I just hope, I really hope that that message, it really needs to be lifted up and we need folks at the top to hear that this is an instrument that exists. It covers everything, and we really need to revisit it, I think. Thank you very much.

MR. BISHOP: You're on mute, Commissioner Karpel.

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: Sorry, I apologize. There was quite a traffic horn-honking event outside my window, so I put myself on mute.

Go ahead, Ms. Hill.

MS. HILL: Thank you. I just wanted to address a
little bit, we were talking about unions, and I, you know, belong to one and work for one, and I'd like to say that, you know, our trade agreements often do not address -- I'd like to reiterate they don't address labor rights a lot of times and we don't have policies here that really affirm labor rights within the United States, and those can be very, very useful in terms of helping prop up families, helping prop up communities with better infusion of cash and because of the high-paying jobs or even lower-paying jobs and just making them more flexible or ensuring that women can keep those jobs because they can't be fired at will.

But we really need to do some thought just in general on, one, the union rights and the fact that a union contract can actually put provisions in it if they can negotiate this to help if a plant shuts down and make the impact on the community less, especially if there's, you know, good provisions in there and those contracts coming are few and further between; but, also, we need to talk about investment in communities because you see things like, okay, before large plant shutdowns in, you know, like the western Pennsylvania area, like 30 years ago, they had public transportation that went to the local colleges directly. They don't have that now. Because of the disinvestment and the closure of a lot of these plants, we don't see -- you know, I can cite two communities within a 70-mile radius that
no longer have any public transportation into Pittsburgh, where people can find better jobs, where they can actually find education. As a matter of fact, if you wanted to go to some of the colleges, you would have to take three buses because of things like this.

And I would urge you not only with Trade Adjustment Assistance, which can be huge and usually help individuals, but also to provide a lot of help for communities and just in general provide help such as -- provide things such as maternity leave, provide things such as -- CEDA was mentioned, and CEDA would be -- you know, putting this in trade agreements would be awesome and just some things that guarantee that women could access some of the jobs that are out there, that they could access some of the education, and that some of this disinvestment from these trade policies would be countered not only on an individual basis but on a community basis and also with union rights so that everybody could benefit from having a union job and higher wages.

MR. BISHOP: You're on mute again, Commissioner.

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: Sorry again. The honking of the horns, at least they've quieted down for now.

Ms. James, please go ahead.

MS. JAMES: Thank you. The TAA for Workers Program is a robust reemployment program and can be a life-changing retraining program that covers all training and tuition,
books, fees, and even required equipment. In some cases, housing and relocation is also included. So we need to add childcare to the law and get our law passed before it sunsets June 30, 2022, and this is to protect our current and future workers affected by trade, specifically foreign trade. So trade impacts our workers whether we have trade agreements in place or not, and it's important to consider how all imports and exports affect our workers and even looking at impacts from companies that are owned by foreign investments making decisions within our nation.

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: Can I ask a follow-up, Ms. James? In terms of the TAA program that you work with, do you have programs that are specifically targeted or tailored to women or to LGBTQ workers, or is it more about making sure those programs are equally accessible to those kinds of workers?

MS. JAMES: Equal access. And we work with partners, so we work with that organization, that Oregon Women's in Trade Apprenticeship Program that I was speaking of earlier, and we work with customers to identify their retraining goals and plans and help to match them to that with our partner referrals and training facilities. We work with Title I and WIOA.

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: Okay. Thank you.

MS. JAMES: Mm-hmm.
COMMISSIONER KARPEL: I open up that question to others, if there are programs to assist workers in retraining or job transition, if there's programs that are tailored to women or should be more tailored or have maybe -- maybe be targeted at women or LGBTQ individuals, if others have views on that or whether it's more just making sure there are programs -- the programs that are out there are equally accessible. So I'll go to Ms. Gayle.

MS. GAYLE: Thank you. So I can speak briefly just to the impact of trade on women-owned businesses and then touch briefly on how trade policy can help support a more inclusive trade environment and women's economic empowerment.

So, on the impact piece, we know that when women-owned businesses, small businesses export, they tend to earn more, they pay more, they employ more people, and they're more productive than firms that are only operating domestically. But despite all of these opportunities, we still see what an entrepreneur is just accounting for a disproportionately small share of exporters relative to their numbers.

And then, on the macro scale, trade has the potential to expand women's role in the economy and help decrease inequality and expand women's access to skills and education. And there's research that shows that if men and women were to participate equally in the global economy, the
world would experience a 28 trillion or 26 percent increase. So that's huge. And we know that trade has this really powerful -- has the potential to be a really powerful tool to promote women's economic empowerment around the world and more broadly just inclusive growth around the world, but all that potential, just we can't really access it if women are not able to access international trade.

So then kind of going into the policy piece, in terms of looking at solutions, two things that I want to mention are, one, capacity building, and then, two, looking at mainstreaming digital technologies in trade facilitation.

So, on the capacity-building piece, just really looking at how, if women entrepreneurs were given the tools and export training and digital capacity building and other trade promotion programs to help navigate some of the digital trade world, it would be easier for them to participate and access all of those opportunities. So this can be done through public-private partnerships, by involving women in both kind of the project development and the implementation and encouraging networks and really looking at, like, mentorship and making sure that they have access to information and capital.

And then looking at the digital technology in trade facilitation piece, so for women entrepreneurs, administrative burdens and red tape are huge burdens to
global trade. And so, by digitizing the physical trade lane processes, that could help reduce a lot of that red tape and the costs and some of those supply chain bottlenecks and decrease that entry to barrier for women entrepreneurs. So we're looking at adopting policies and, like, recognizing and permitting e-signatures and more, like, contactless customs clearances and really making sure that governments can help improve the regulatory framework for small businesses to help encourage fair just global engagement there for helping women entrepreneurs.

And I think just the fact that there's so much paperwork and different rules globally, this is an enormous time suck for women entrepreneurs, and, of course, they don't have an army of lawyers or, like, a team to pull through the weeds of just regulations and everything, so that is a really important piece.

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: Thank you. Appreciate that perspective.

Who do we have? Ms. Faustin?

MS. FAUSTIN: Yes. One concept, it's not necessarily a support but just a conversation around supports needed, concept of the benefits cliff that we're discussing a lot with our partners of understanding that, you know, even providing the $17 an hour opportunity for women in upward mobility position could be counterproductive to the benefits
they receive from government supports, and so they would rather keep the lower-paying jobs so they can access full childcare rather than getting a $17, $18, or even $19 an hour job if that means they would lose their access to free childcare and they would need to pay for that themselves. At the end, the net benefit is none. So just the conversation around -- the education around the benefits cliff for support agencies, as well as corporations, to understand what it means when you're asking a woman. To even give her a 50 cents to a dollar raise could really mean they lose a significant portion of their income. So just education around that concept for programs and employers would be extremely beneficial.

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: Yeah, thanks for raising that.

Ms. Schmid?

MS. SCHMID: Hi. I just wanted to kind of echo what has been said before so that you have another person making this point. I think one issue is, as we're coming out of the pandemic, we have a very low labor market participation rate for women, and that is due, they say, because of the Census surveys they take every month on employment, they ask individuals, you know, what is keeping you out of the job market, and for women of a certain age, particularly those with children, they're saying childcare is
a primary reason why they're not reentering the job force. So I wanted to make that point.

And then I think we don't -- we may not think of the challenges that lower income and less skilled workers may have coming out of the pandemic and then reentering the marketplace, and it's important to consider that.

First of all, they are more dependent on labor income, so it's that much more difficult to reenter the job market because they don't necessarily have assets. They are not necessarily stock or bond holders. They do not necessarily have a large savings that they can rely on to help them, you know, one, move to another community where there might be a job or pay for education and retraining.

So, when you start thinking about our education and retraining programs for workers, we need to think of the bigger picture and the fact that we're coming out of this pandemic, we have a lot of people who just are sitting on the sidelines because of these obstacles: childcare, the ability to train for -- the ability to afford education and retraining, and the fact that they're just operating with much fewer resources. It's hard to keep that in mind when you're in Washington, but that is really -- it's a real challenge for people, and I just wanted to, you know, add that to the record.

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: Thank you. I appreciate
that.

Anyone else would like to speak about programs or policies that have been helpful or need to change or be tailored in some way? Ms. Hill?

MS. HILL: I'd just like to ask that we put more into the development of certainly childcare but not just childcare itself. It is so difficult for women who work in jobs that are around the clock to find round-the-clock childcare if they don't have a spouse or if they don't have family willing to watch their children. I would just -- I would definitely urge some investment in that as well because it's very, very difficult for them to find that childcare and also, you know, fairly just better leave policies and investment in communities.

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: Thank you.

Ms. Fitzgerald?

MS. FITZGERALD: Yes. On the issue of childcare, the money that we have in childcare systems is not used as effectively as it possibly could be given that every state can have its own, you know, the box or the federal regulations and law, its own requirements that make it very difficult for people to access childcare unless they are in some sort of a particular pilot kind of program related to workforce. You can't get childcare in Mississippi unless you're working, but you can't go to work unless you have
childcare, unless you're working or in education.

So looking at some of these rules that prohibit or inhibit a person's ability to go to work and stay there, transportation is the same kind of thing. There are all of these rules and requirements that treat social services as different from economic opportunity. We have the Welfare Reform Program that was to move women from welfare to work, and what we have successfully done is to move women off welfare, which means that they are even in worse situations than before, but not to work.

So I feel fairly hopeful that one of the things that might survive out of this upcoming legislative agenda for the President will be childcare, will be childcare and access to pre-kindergarten, which are critical for workforce development as well. But the rules that apply to this expanded childcare money should lend itself to helping people attach to jobs and being able to stay there or attach to training and being able to stay there.

And we talked about -- somebody spoke a little bit before about transportation to community colleges. It's not even to cities. We did some two generation work in a rural community in the Mississippi Delta, and the community college was no more than 10 miles away from the little town, but the women were being charged $20 each way for transportation out to the community college. Access to transportation
assistance through programs like the community action agency were limited and hard to come by. So reinvestment in those kinds of systems, you know, the old workforce systems that community action agencies grew out of, but looking at how those agencies can be better utilized to weave together what women need to be able to -- and the mentoring part of that, to go to get training and to bring training to where they are.

The other thing is around what I hope somebody is having a conversation about in terms of public health and the public health delivery system given what happened during COVID, that there's opportunity in that deficit that we all saw, that there's an opportunity to build a healthcare workforce that is linked to Medicare and Medicaid so that women are continuously paid and can be trained for jobs and continuously paid. So just thinking outside of the box about how these programs are in silos, but they all are supposed to be moving people toward workforce and economic opportunity.

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: Thank you. Thank you for sharing that perspective.

Dr. Borrowman?

DR. BORROWMAN: Yeah. Just to jump in on kind of the childcare piece but also to think about -- especially since we're having, you know, changing demographics of the U.S. population, I think the care needs, right, are kind of
brought under childcare. I think that's, like, a very important first piece, but I think also thinking about, like, elder care and kind of like those long-term care pieces, care support for those with extra needs and people with disabilities, like, this is all again part of the kind of picture we need to put together that is going to really impact, you know, labor force participation. So I just want to bring in this as well.

And then I feel like this is just -- it's been said, but I want to reiterate, as we think about programs and policies for the LGBTQI community, you know, it's an umbrella term with a lot of specific needs within that, and I think there's a lot of importance of thinking really deliberately about the needs of specific populations under that umbrella and what are the barriers for those, what are the specific needs of those populations, and really approaching that with a lot of thoughtfulness because I think that there are really specific needs and barriers for each group, and that's again going to be influenced and I guess promoting an intersectional lens here too, right. Those needs and barriers are going to be different for, you know, LatinX trans women versus, you know, cisgender gay men, so I think that it makes it for a very complicated approach, but I think to be the most successful, you know, integrating intersectionality in your approach as much as possible and
then also looking at the specific needs for LGBTQ populations under that umbrella.

COMMISIONER KARPEL: Yeah. Thank you very much for bringing that up.

Others who would like to speak on policies or programs or to circle back to some of the other topics we addressed earlier, some of the impacts from trade? Yes, Mr. Meserve?

MR. MESERVE: Well, we keep bringing up childcare a lot, and it's important. I hear a lot of my workers struggling to get to work because of childcare. I have a brother that's a school teacher, seem like we put a lot of strain on our public education using it as childcare. And so I think wherever this discussion goes after this, I think it needs to be brought up that public education doesn't need to be taken -- we need to figure out childcare and not put it on public education to fill that void. So, I don't know, I just want to say that.

COMMISIONER KARPEL: Thank you for sharing that.

MR. MESERVE: Sure.

COMMISIONER KARPEL: Ms. James?

MS. JAMES: Yeah. We wanted to just mention a final thought here, that we wanted to acknowledge and say thank you for the work that the International Trade Commission does to investigate and issue the decisions when
you do find unfair trade practices. This work is really important to mention as we continue the conversation around trade impacts to workers in the hopes to prevent those impacts in the future. So we wanted to be sure and say thank you for that.

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: Thank you for raising that. Appreciate that.

All right. Well, we're getting close to our two-hour mark. I did want to circle back with a comment I think that Mr. Davis had made about, if I understood correctly, that LGBTQ workers may be concentrated in certain fields. Could you elaborate a bit on that? I think others have raised that women may be -- I think Ms. Schmid raised women being focused in some of the service industries. But could you speak a little bit more to that, that remark you made?

MR. DAVIS: Sure. Well, again, this, you know, revolves around a data issue. We have very limited data to, like, back this up, but the Human Rights Campaign did a study during the pandemic that found that 40 percent of LGBTQ people work in just five industries. That's -- let me see if I can remember those off the top of my head. It was restaurants and hospitality, K-12, higher ed, hospitals, and retail. Those same five industries only represent about 22 percent of the jobs in the general population but 40 percent
of the jobs in the LGBTQ population. So we know there are
different concentrations of LGBTQ people in different parts
of the economy. Just by that data, that tells us that there
are obviously some concentrations.

And then, you know -- so I think it's important to
look at that piece and see, you know, are there -- is there a
concentration of LGBTQI people in this field that's being
affected by trade, is there a concentration of women in the
field that's being affected by trade. So that's kind of what
I was getting to.

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: Yeah, thank you.

Ms. Schmid?

MS. SCHMID: I just wanted to add, so the Bureau of
Labor Statistics does have some really good tools right now
where they will give you a breakdown of employment in the
services sector and then they'll give you a schematic of the
wages and you can see which sectors are persistently low
wage.

And just to give you a sense, you've got 80 percent
of U.S. workers employed in service industries. Professional
and business services represent 3.2 percent. Employment in
manufacturing is 7.9 percent. Financial services and
information technology is 7.5 percent. Healthcare and social
assistance is 12.9 percent. And then leisure, hospitality,
and retail represent 18.4 percent.
So the issue here -- and this is what I've been looking at in terms of trying to understand the services economy -- is what do you need to do -- I mean, we're focusing on manufacturing and we've got certain policies that we're adopting to strengthen manufacturing, but we have to look at these persistently low-wage service sectors, which is leisure, hospitality, and retail trade, and we need to ask our -- we need to ask the questions, why are those jobs persistently low wage, and, I mean, I think it has a lot to do with the fact that you have a decreasing number of people who are employed in unions and you have a lot more asymmetries of power between workers and companies and their ability to collective bargain.

And here again, I want to draw back into what we've done in the USCMA. When we talk about doing training, for example, with women on collective bargaining, we don't want to just focus on Mexico. We want to also focus on the United States. So I hope that answers -- you know, gives you a fuller picture of employment in the labor -- in services industries. But, again, if you look at the Bureau of Labor Statistics and you see the graphics that they've -- I mean, this is recent -- that they've come up with and they show you the costs and which sectors are, I think it will help us develop policies that will improve the environment for workers in those persistently low-wage sectors.
COMMISSIONER KARPEL: Thank you for sharing that. Appreciate that.

I'm going to call on Ms. Faustin next, but before I do, I just wanted to open the floor as we're approaching the two-hour mark for anyone else who has any final comments to add or some issues to raise that maybe I didn't ask about but they would like to share. I welcome those views and perspectives. And then I'll open the floor to my colleagues, the fellow Commissioners, if they have any questions to pose. And I hope a few of you are able to stay a bit past 3:00, but if you're not, again, we understand you may have other commitments. But, for those who can stay, please do. So, Ms. Faustin, please go ahead.

MS. FAUSTIN: Thank you all for having this space for us to have a conversation. I wanted to echo on how right the need for more data for the LGBTQ+ community, but also in the sense of more funding for the organizations to provide education around the needs. Just as this conversation is under the umbrella of gender and sexual orientation, we often find that initiatives focused on women are also focused -- the need for LGBTQ+ community without the adequate education and resources.

Our organization has had to lean on our LGBTQ+ partners for education and they are usually understaffed, underpaid, to be able to support us in those initiatives. So
I just wanted to advocate, as we are seeing the lack of data and lack of support, there are organizations like ours that want to be more inclusive and provide different supports, but we need education. So helping the other organizations with additional funding for education so they can support the communities around them. So I just wanted to lift that up as an option and a desire in this space.

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: Thank you very much.

Any additional thoughts from participants that you want to share? Yes, Ms. Husk?

MS. HUSK: I just wanted to go back again, the childcare has been raised several times. I think we all know that's an issue. Paid maternity leave, that is an issue, you know, that, you know, a lot of times women have to just take leave and try to deal with it whenever they need that.

Another thing that has really become apparent to me with one of the members of our local, Mr. Meserve -- he's actually my union president -- he kind of spoke to it -- is we have a lot of issues with -- and it goes right along with the childcare, with COVID and people having to take off work to care for their children, especially our newer employees. They don't quality for FLMA for a full year until they've been employed that long, and a lot of them run into attendance issues within that first year because they've had to miss, you know, due to
a child being quarantined or, you know, just sick and they
have to take off and care for this child.

So, you know, these people are having to make that
hard decision, you know, between their families and their
jobs and the job that they need so desperately to support
their families. So I think that's another thing that just
kind of goes into with women, you know, because, generally,
we are the caregivers, we're the mothers, and so I think that
that's an issue that needs to be looked at.

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: Thank you for sharing that.

Well, then I will ask if any -- if the other Commissioners
have questions they wanted to pose to today's participants.
Chair Kearns?

CHAIR KEARNS: Great. Well, thank you all very
much for participating today. This is very interesting. I
guess, let's see, I'll start with this question, I think, and
I don't know how readily available this data is, but it is
interesting. I guess I'll start with you, Ms. Borrowman.

You know, you mentioned that, you know, the jobs are sort of
segregated in the United States, and, I mean, it does seem to
me like one thing we're going to need to get a good handle on
is on those data. How readily available is the -- are those
data? I mean, can we say that, you know, in steel
production, you know, it's 35 percent women? I mean, because
I think we're going to want -- in order to kind of connect
this back to trade, I think we have to take a lot of what you're saying and then have, you know, the trade economists come in and say here's a sector that hasn't done so well in trade, here's a sector that's done very well in trade, and here's kind of the dynamic of that in terms of gender and orientation. And I was very happy to hear Mr. Davis make a similar point about the data with the Human -- was it Human -- not Human Rights Watch, it was another group. But, in any event --

MR. DAVIS: Human Rights Campaign.

CHAIR KEARNS: Human Rights Campaign, yes, of course. So can you help speak to that? Can you share that data with us in order to help us understand, you know, where the jobs are and aren't in terms of women and in terms of orientation?

DR. BORROWMAN: Yes, I think there is readily available data by gender at least in the binary, right? But I think my work -- I've done a lot of work on looking at these patterns globally where the data isn't so great, but I think that is available in the U.S., and I can send you some of that later, and I think Linda was even pointing to some of that within the service sector, so that is there.

For sexual orientation, you know, different gender identities, that is not there, not well anyway. I think there's, like, some, you know, small-scale efforts, as Jerame

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was talking about within the HRC, but it's just not really readily available yet, so that will be much more of a challenge. We might be able to put together kind of like a, you know, patchwork of things to get a broad sense, but I don't think you'll be able to do the type of in-depth analysis that you would with gender, where you can say yes, these are the different breakdowns by sector or even maybe with some wage data and your economists can come in and do these kind of, like, models, right, of shocks for those sectors and see what the impacts would be. So I think you'll have a little bit of different capabilities with each.

CHAIR KEARNS: Okay. We'd love your help in sort of gathering that data if we don't already have it. I think that that would be helpful.

DR. BORROWMAN: Yeah, I'd be happy to collaborate after the call, so I'll be in touch.

CHAIR KEARNS: Thank you.

Morgan? She froze. Morgan, did you have something to add?

MS. MENTZER: Yeah, I just wanted to add with the data collection I think what's critical is the questions you're going to ask and the information that you will provide to employers as to how to that gather that data. I think there's a lot of confusion from many employers about how do I even talk about gender identity versus sexual orientation. A
lot of people conflate the two things. So really providing
guidance that I think is garnered from, you know, community
organizations and working with specific LGBT community
members about what are the questions that we can ask to make
the data the most effective and reflective of the actual
numbers.

CHAIR KEARNS: Okay. Thank you.

One little thought too on what you said, Jerame, the sectors you mentioned sounded to me like sectors that
aren't as tradable as some of the other sectors, and I guess
we have to kind of know more about the data to know if that's
ture, but then it's interesting to me to think about where we
go from there if that's true, you know, what does that then
mean. So I don't know. I'm just thinking out loud here, but
that, to me, is kind of the next step that we'll have to
think about in terms of that segment of things. I have one
other question, but I'm going to turn it over to Vice Chair
Stayin. I saw he had a question.

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: I think Ms. Schmid had her
hand up. If it's in response to Chair Kearns, please go
ahead.

CHAIR KEARNS: Great. Thank you.

MS. SCHMID: Yeah, I would say that, I mean, for
example, if you're looking at services trade and you're
looking at the persistently low-wage service sectors, they
were probably the sectors that were hit hardest by the pandemic because you had this fall-off in travel to the United States, so when we think about services, we have to remember that a big part of services trade is when we have international patients, businessmen, tourists, students coming to the United States that are purchasing all of these services, and it's actually, I mean, education services is one of our largest exports, so it's creative thinking in thinking about the nexus between our trade policies and service industries, and a lot of times this means looking at the regulatory infrastructure. I mean, that's a short answer to that question of whether or not they're traded services, but, generally speaking, if foreigners are coming to purchase them, they're traded services.

CHAIR KEARNS: Thank you. That's very helpful. I'm smiling because my wife is an English as a Second Language teacher at the college level, and she is now unemployed since COVID happened. Almost all of her students were Chinese, I think, and, yes, so I know what you're saying, so thank you.

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: Did any other Commissioners want to -- go ahead, Vice Chair.

VICE CHAIR STAYIN: Yes. A number of you have had experience with issues involving the difficulty of women and/or LBGTQ trying to get jobs in the manufacturing sector.

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These are obviously good jobs and, certainly, both of those would be able to learn and be trained to do the work in the manufacturing sector. What has been the success of being able to bring those jobs to those people? We've heard about the difficulties. Have there been success and how was -- what was the basis? How were they able to have success in getting into the good manufacturing jobs? I think some of the union people might have commented on that. Your microphone. Your microphone.

MR. MESERVE: I'm not really sure I have an answer.

VICE CHAIR STAYIN: There you are. I mean, these people are in jobs. I mean, we have people who are in these jobs, and I guess I'm hoping they're able to maintain and stay there. Is that true?

MR. MESERVE: Well, my experience, I mean, with having a union and a union contract, you know, we have an anti-discrimination clause in our contract, so that protects people, protects women, so, I mean, as long as you're able to train and learn the job, it doesn't matter. The rest of it is irrelevant.

VICE CHAIR STAYIN: So are the unions mutually supportive of these different sectors?

MR. MESERVE: United Steel Workers definitely is.

VICE CHAIR STAYIN: Thank you.

Anybody else want to comment? Ms. Hill?
COMMISSIONER KARPEL: Ms. Hill? Yes.

MS. HILL: I just wanted to comment that, you know, we need the outreach. I think there's a lack of outreach in the manufacturing sectors to women in general. A lot of times it's not something -- you know, you don't see -- and I know as a union we frequently run programs into schools, but you don't see the discussion around manufacturing. It's not seen as a "sexy" industry to go into, and it's not seen as one frequently that is -- I think women end up with a -- we have many, many successful women, but I just think, in general, when kids are in high school, they're not thinking about manufacturing, especially females, as a job to go into, and I think that needs to be changed with outreach to schools because I think they're going to be -- you know, your young girls might be thinking more about nursing.

They might be thinking about other jobs that they see -- you know, they don't see as many women in manufacturing that look like, you know, people that look like them in these jobs, so I think it's really something that we need to look at in terms of trying to do that, and I know that there's a number of unions that carry outreach into schools and they have women who are doing outreach in schools. I'm an officer for Coalition of Labor Union Women, and I know some of our women do that, but I just think it's something that needs to be done more frequently.
VICE CHAIR STAYIN: Do you find that women are getting jobs in manufacturing, that they have the capability as much as any man does and that in that sense they are getting into it and then the question is what you just brought up, do they know that there is such an opportunity in manufacturing and getting in and passing this kind of information on to students coming up is very important, but I think it's pretty important to encourage -- these are good jobs, and I think that we need women and the LGB communities to be able to have those opportunities, so we look forward to, you know, your suggestions and any thoughts you may have.

MS. HILL: If I might add?

VICE CHAIR STAYIN: Please.

MS. HILL: Many manufacturing jobs -- so part of the problem is many manufacturing jobs lack flexibility, and not just women need flexibility. Men need flexibility as well because they have share of the child-caring duties, and so pushing that aspect would be really, really helpful. I'm not quite -- you know, there are some programs that would do that, but manufacturers are typically reluctant to have more flexible jobs at least in my experience.

Andy, you might have a different experience there, but it just seems that, you know, manufacturers are less flexible than other industries in terms of getting women into these jobs, and I would actually -- I've spoken before to
companies about how they need to have more flexibility in their jobs because, you know, men share childcare duties, and sometimes men are even afraid -- it's not just women, but sometimes men are afraid to speak up and admit they have childcare duties, and it sometimes has a detrimental impact on their employment. I'm sorry, I'm getting off topic here, but --

VICE CHAIR STAYIN: No, I appreciate your comments. Ms. Mentzer, did you want to comment?

MS. MENTZER: Yeah, we find in our organization that a lot of folks from the LGBTQ community are absolutely interested in the trades, manufacturing, all of that. A lot of the issue for us comes with retention and creating a space where folks actually can remain in the job, and that varies from facing discrimination and harassment to lack of visibility and mentorship opportunity, so I think connecting folks that are underrepresented, building the system so we can say, yes, there is someone that you identify with, you can talk to them if something comes up, provide support systems. The retention is really what we're seeing a lot of, is folks want these jobs, they want the economic benefits, but it's staying in the job when they're facing any kind of discrimination or harassment is what drives many folks out.

VICE CHAIR STAYIN: That's a very important point. They get into the job and they're working in the job and they
may be doing the work as well as anybody else, but because of different -- they are harassed and driven out of the jobs.

Ms. Faustin, you had a comment?

MS. FAUSTIN: Absolutely. I really appreciate this conversation. Just a couple of points. Our organization focuses on the pipeline, so we start as young as seven years old with hands-on engaging opportunities for girls and we go through adults with job training.

As far as the welcoming environment that was just discussed, the was a USA Today study done last year that said apprenticeship environments are reported as hostile by 97 percent of women who go through them, and that's from their fellow trainees to the instructors to then the placement later, so that's still the sexual harassment, feeling of being welcomed in the space is still uncommon.

As far as education, I wanted to note that my little super heroes in the back here, speaking of childcare, as far as education is concerned, what we're seeing also for elementary age, middle school, high school is that it's not just about access to those pathways, it's the gatekeepers of school counselors, teachers, and even parents who still see the trades as a lesser path, and if an opportunity is presented to a young person, they have so many people in their ear telling them that's not the way to go. So the stigma around the trades is still a prevalent barrier to
having more workers interested in the space. And then the last piece around flexibility, again, because we have a shortage of individuals in the manufacturing space, we are seeing greater flexibility. You know, necessity is the mother of invention. They're sharing workers down here with schedules because there's not enough trained, skilled people to do the manufacturing work, and so, when they get their backs up against the wall, we're seeing ingenuity happen as far as how they can get more workers into their space. Thank you.

VICE CHAIR STAYIN: Great. Thank you, and thank all of you. I appreciate everything that you brought to us today, and we have a lot to think about.

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: Any other -- oh, go ahead Chair Kearns.

MR. BISHOP: You're on mute, Mr. Chair.

CHAIR KEARNES: Thank you very much. Sorry about that. I have one question for you, Ms. Husk. I think this quote I have that my aide sent me I think is from you. You said I work in a primary aluminum smelter. We went from employing 500 to 180. We had 30 women, and now we have 12. Even though we have hired back 430, we still have very few women. Jobs became -- this is an interesting point that I want to ask you about. Jobs became physically harder because jobs were combined. This forced women to take early
retirement and so forth. Can you tell us more about that? What caused the cut in your workforce? And can you tell us more about kind of that dynamic on the factory floor, why it is that it makes it harder for women in those situations?

MS. HUSK: Yes, I can. In 2015, there was an influx of aluminum from China that caused aluminum prices just to plummet, which caused American smelters, you know, to struggle quite a bit. America actually lost several smelters during that time, and our smelter curtailed from five-line operation down to a two-line operation, and what that did is several of our departments downsized, and it forced a lot of women back into the potlines, which is the most physical department that we have, so a lot of these ladies in their 60s are being forced back into the potlines, you know, when they've already developed arthritis issues, whatever, and they're having -- and they were struggling there.

And also in the potlines we used to have three different classifications of jobs and each had their own jobs. They had their own little part of it, you know, so everybody had their thing to do. Whenever we had the downturn and we went to a two-line operation, you know, the company was struggling just trying to stay afloat, and so they did away with a lot of those classifications, so now there wasn't -- a woman couldn't say, okay, I can do this job and then use their seniority to bid into a job that she was...
able to do with her physical abilities. Those were gone because now all the job tasks came into one job, and if she, you know, couldn't do all of them, then she wasn't able to do that part of that job or do that job anymore.

So, like I said, it really affected our plant greatly. Like I said, you know, there was a tariff signed in. I can't remember when President Trump signed that in exactly, I'm thinking about '17, you know, and that changed our industry dramatically to where aluminum prices are back. Like I say, we're in a rebuilding. We've hired a lot of people, but, like I said, because things have changed and now women coming in, the potlines is where we hire women into and, like I said, those job classifications have gone away and there's so much stuff do to. Training is very hard. We have a lot of training issues in our plant that we're trying to work through.

Like I said, it's just become such a physical job that women coming in, they're struggling with it. Then we also have other issues of forced overtime and flexible schedules that I think Ms. Hill spoke about. We're seeing all that in our plant, and like I said, it not only affects, you know, the women coming in, like Ms. Hill also spoke, you know, our young fathers are coming in and they're struggling with this, with these schedules, these forced overtimes, 16-hour days, and sometimes people are just having to make
that decision, you know, that this is a great-paying job. In
our area right here, you know, it's up there with the top
ones. We've got great benefits, but sometimes these people
just have to make the decision that I have to put my family
first.

CHAIR KEARNS: And in your experience, is it harder
for women to take forced overtime than men because of family
commitments or whatnot?

MS. HUSK: I think it can be. Especially, you
know, some of our women, we see young mothers, young single
mothers, you know, they're already working a swing shift,
which is very hard to procure childcare. You know, you
almost have to have someone that can help because we don't
have a lot of childcare in our area. In Hancock County, I
think we have about 9,000 people in our whole county, so
we're a very small rural county, so we already don't have a
lot of childcare options in the county, you know, so usually
people are dependent on mom or dad or somebody who also may
be working but then maybe keeping a child over a night shift,
and so, you know, now you're forced over four hours in the
morning, so who's going to go get the child, who's going to,
you know, get them to school, to do all those type of things.

So then we wind up, like I said, everybody with
attendance issues because people, you know, they just can't
leave their child, so they're having to do the call-offs,
and, you know, there's no provision for that leave for them, so we wind up, like I said, losing a lot of people from those issues.

CHAIR KEARNS: That's very helpful. Just two follow-up questions. One is -- so that you kind of explained what happened when the jobs were lost. Did things go back to how they were when you got back up to 430, or did it remain sort of where people are doing -- were combining jobs and that sort of thing?

MS. HUSK: We're still combining jobs. Actually, we've had one department that we very recently like within the last month have kind of split it back out into some classifications because, like I said, the company has realized that the training issues -- when you're trying to train people for all the duties in five jobs, you know, it's very hard to get people trained, so, like I said, the company has realized this and that there's a need to do this and it's started, but we're not completely there yet.

CHAIR KEARNS: Okay. And just to make sure I understand, so you said that you had 60-year-old women who were going back to the -- what's it called? The pot -- what's it called again?

MS. HUSK: Potlines.

CHAIR KEARNS: Potlines.

MS. HUSK: Yes.
CHAIR KEARNS: And so I'm guessing that they got to keep their jobs because they have seniority, but they had to go back to doing the very difficult work that they were no longer able to do and that was harder for women than it is for men when you're 60, I guess.

MS. HUSK: Yes, I mean, well, it would be hard for men when they're 60 also. Our potlines is where our smelting pots are. It's a high heat area, a lot of physical work, especially when the jobs were combined because, like I said, before, you know, there was three classifications, and if you had the seniority, you could bid into the classification, you know, where you'd have to do less of that physical work. We had a lot of women over the years that have bid into fork-truck drivers, you know, because that's the less physical, so they could handle that work better, but when all the classifications were shoved into one, there was no -- the fork-truck driver could also be the one who was having to, you know, use a crowbar or huge wrenches or -- you understand what I'm saying?

CHAIR KEARNS: I do. Yeah, that's very helpful. Thank you very much. I don't have any other questions.

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: Commissioner Johanson?

COMMISSIONER JOHANSON: Yes, thanks for all of you for being here today. It's been a very interesting discussion. I had a question for Ms. Faustin. You brought
up something earlier today. Is she still on the line?

MS. FAUSTIN: Yes, I'm here.

COMMISSIONER JOHANSON: Okay. I'm sorry. I didn't see you there. Okay, Ms. Faustin. Earlier today you brought up the issue of unfilled positions in North Carolina. You said there are a number of unfilled positions in your area. I was wondering why are these jobs not being filled, and can you maybe describe in particular what types of jobs these are and if women might be dissuaded from applying for them?

MS. FAUSTIN: Excellent. So there's a number of unfilled jobs. The ones that I was discussing in particular were in advanced manufacturing, so we have a number of manufacturing companies from tool maker -- Black & Decker is one of our partners that they're just struggling to see the pipeline being filled. I think that's the narrative across the board for trades in general. You know, it the data around by the year 2028 there'd be two to three million jobs available in the skilled trades without the workers to be able to fill them, and we're seeing the pandemic put an exponent behind, you know, that, and so what we're seeing is the increased need and just the lack of skill set, being able to have it readily available.

What we're trying to do is trying to fill that gap, so with the trades having been taken out of public education around the '70s and '80s, then about two generations of
individuals, unless you had a -- my little stump speech, unless you had an uncle or aunt who was in the trades or someone with a garage with a saw that you could be exposed to, there is a whole population of individuals who have self-selected as unqualified for these roles because they've never been exposed to it. We're trying to close that gap of exposure.

Women in particular, we have an upward mobility concern here in Charlotte where, if you're born in poverty in this community, you have a 0.4 chance of getting out of poverty, and so we're trying to connect the dots between trades and the communities of poverty in our community with single mothers being a large population there, and so it's the gap of the availability of the training needed to get in there as well as some of the standards that are asked for, like that four-year degree that may or may not be necessary to actually fulfill the need for that job, and so it's a quick answer. I hope that answers in general the question. I'm happy to go deeper if any additional context is needed.

COMMISSIONER JOHANSON: Yes, actually, I mean, you mentioned the need for training. Actually, I have two components to my question. First of all, are local community colleges providing some of that training, and secondly, are the employers or potential employers, are they providing internship opportunities or other opportunities for folks to
enter these different trades?

MS. FAUSTIN: So I know, in South Carolina, in the area, York Tech does have coursework around advanced manufacturing, and then employers are looking to be able to provide both internships and apprenticeship opportunities. I think there's a disconnected workforce community here that helps -- that allows for the education information to get to the people who need it the best, so there's like pockets of employers who are providing a little bit of a training over here, a little bit of training over there, but the interconnectedness of the system is lacking to be able to ensure that the information is given to the masses for those opportunities.

COMMISSIONER JOHANSON: Yeah. Thanks, Ms. Faustin. It's frustrating for us to hear this. You're not the first witness in these roundtables to bring up the issue of positions not being filled due to inadequate training.

MS. FAUSTIN: Yes, sir.

COMMISSIONER JOHANSON: I mean, that's something I do think that our society in general has to try to find a way to address this because, if there are jobs out there and we have people without employment who need employment, we need to find a way to see that they can actually qualify for these jobs, so --

MS. FAUSTIN: Absolutely. What we're seeing here
is a very active conversation, is our workforce development funding is beginning to be redirected, so that may sound simple, but you have to have an employer commitment of hiring before they fund your workforce training. There's lots of organizations that do training that may or may not lead to a job that I think people have been assuming for years now that, oh, they had these training opportunities from other nonprofit organizations, but they're not leading to the jobs in that field.

So we're trying to re-invigorate what that conversation looks like to say no, there has to be an employer commitment on the front end that they will hire these, that the employer is involved in the curriculum so that those workers are job ready when they finish these training programs, so just the disconnect there. I think the resources are there, but they're not connected to the right individuals. There's a disconnect in the pipeline of the training provider and the employer so, by the time they come out, they might have gotten some basic knowledge, but they still don't make the entry-level requirements for that organization.

COMMISSIONER JOHANSON: Are companies willing to make the commitment to hire people who will go into training at the time they decide to enter the programs?

MS. FAUSTIN: We're starting to see a greater
commitment there, so I'll give an example. Rosendin Electric, a worldwide electrician company here. We have a basis here in Charlotte. They're hiring 250 individuals this year for the jobs they need to do uptown Charlotte, and they've committed 50 of those jobs for novice workers, so, of the 250, they're saying 50 will be novice, and we're working directly with them to get them individuals up to par to be that novice level so that, of course, when they come onto a jobsite, say they're not a danger to you or them. They have enough basic knowledge to be, you know, field ready at that time.

So we're starting to see a greater influx of employers who are ready. They have no other choice honestly. They're running out of people to do the jobs, so they're having to open their doors to more people that they might have previously not considered.

COMMISSIONER JOHANSON: All right. Well, thank you, Ms. Faustin. I greatly appreciate your input.

MS. FAUSTIN: You're welcome. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER JOHANSON: And thanks to everyone else who's appeared on the panel today.

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: Commissioner Schmidtlein?

COMMISSIONER SCHMIDTLEIN: Thank you. Well, I'd like to thank everyone for being here today. It's been a fantastic discussion. I've been just loving listening to it.
So my question really goes to something Ms. Husk said and maybe Ms. Faustin, you know, I heard you mention that, you know, once the tariffs went on that you saw the, you know, people being hired back, things started going better, has that also translated into higher wages for people at your plant? Have you all been able to share in that in other words? Ms. Husk?

MS. HUSK: Yes. We actually just negotiated a contract last year, and we had some significant gains in wages.

COMMISSIONER SCHMIDTLEIN: Okay. That's great. And I'm just curious, Ms. Faustin, I think you might have turned your camera off, but do you all see wages, the wages being offered going up given the scarcity of people that are able to fill the jobs that are available? Is that an approach that employers are taking to try to entice people to take those jobs or to somehow get the training? Is that --

MS. FAUSTIN: We are. We are seeing an increase in wages in some of the entry-level positions. There's still, though, the disconnect. For instance, you may have an Amazon, you know, who's offering X amount of funding with a little bit of training, but it's not a career, you know, it doesn't offer, you know, the long-term pathways, and so a little bit of instant gratification is happening in our space, and so we're looking at what can be done to influence
or even support pathways of transition. Like, maybe that's what you need right now is we get you up-skilled to be able to take another position that is a long-term benefit for you and your family.

COMMISSIONER SCHMIDTLEIN: Mm-hmm. Mr. Meserve, I see you have your hand up.

MS. MESERVE: Yeah, I just want to add to Cheryl's comment. Like I said, we have just negotiated a contract and, you know, wage -- we got a good wage package, but with the TAA agreement that's out there, I've had three workers -- I did new-hire orientation, and I've had three employees that have come back into skilled labor maintenance positions that benefitted from those dollars, went back to school. They worked for our plant as production workers, paid off, retrained and now hired back as -- so, you know, definitely got to experience and see those dollars pay off for our facility.

COMMISSIONER SCHMIDTLEIN: Mm-hmm. That's great. Does anyone else want to add anything to that? (No response.)

COMMISSIONER SCHMIDTLEIN: No? Okay. Well, I really appreciate you all being here today. I know I'm conscious of the time. It's already 3:30, so just thank you again.

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: Well, thank you, everyone.
We'll conclude here unless there's any parting words that anyone wants to say. If not, I want to extend a huge thank you to all of you for your time. Oh, I see Ms. Husk. Please go ahead.

MS. HUSK: I just wanted to thank you for the opportunity. I think that one thing with the trade deals, you know, is talking to workers and letting us have a voice, I think, is very important, so I just do want to thank you for the opportunity to be able to have our voice and tell our side of how these things impact us in our workplaces, so I just wanted to say my -- put my appreciation out there.

COMMISSIONER KARPEL: Well, thank you very much. That's a very perfect note to end on. That was our goal and is our task that's been given to us by USTR, is to hear from workers and to hear from others who know workers' experience, who are out there trying to improve things and take a look at the impacts of trade and how they affect different groups differently and what could be done to make that better. So thank you all for bringing your voices to this conversation. It's been hugely helpful and insightful, and thank you again, everyone. I wish you all a wonderful rest of your afternoon. Thanks again.

(Whereupon, at 3:35 p.m., the roundtable in the above-entitled matter was adjourned.)
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