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QuickPoint! – Trump’s apprenticeship message to young adults: “There is dignity in every honest job”

By Kathryn Hickok

President Donald Trump stressed the dignity of work [in a speech last Friday](#) promoting his [Apprenticeship Initiative for young workers](#). “Today, this is the message I want every young American to hear: there is dignity in every honest job, and there is nobility in every honest worker,” Trump said.

This is a timely message. According to a recent [report by the American Enterprise Institute](#), the workforce participation rate for men 25-54 has dropped from 96% in 1967 to about 88% in 2016, an all-time low. Young men, especially with less education, are increasingly opting out of the workforce, and not just due to a weak economy. Other [causes of unemployment among men include](#) “a lack of postsecondary education, dependence on benefit programs, opioid dependency, the rising prevalence of criminal records, a lack of available jobs in economically distressed areas, and weakening cultural norms [that expect able-bodied men to be working].”

Public policies and government regulations should make it easier—not harder—for young people to develop marketable skills and experience. When young adults at the point of entry to work lose the belief that earning a paycheck is better than the ease of drawing a benefit check, the human cost is significant. Renewing a moral sense of the value of labor can refocus policy makers onto solutions promoting gainful employment, the pride of accomplishment, and financial self-sufficiency over dependence on government programs.

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