Good afternoon Chairman Coats, Ranking Member Maloney and members of the committee;

It is an honor to participate in today’s hearing and have the opportunity to discuss issues that are not only important to my constituents, but also to 80 million other millennial Americans throughout the country.

It is critical that we as legislators recognize the opportunity the United States Congress has to support and empower millennials…the current generation between the ages of 18 and 33.

I look forward to sharing my unique perspective both as millennial and a Member of Congress.

Over the last year, I have chaired the House Republican Millennial Taskforce. This taskforce aims to identify and tackle the issues facing millennials while also embracing the unique and innovative ways these Americans face challenges.

I have chaired three hearings to address these goals and trust that what was learned will prove helpful to this committee.

In June, the taskforce invited several leaders in millennial research and polling…including Mr. Meyer who is with us here today.

The hearing explored and delved into the demographics of millennials and identified key issues of concern.

We learned that millennials make up one in three U.S. workers and have now over-taken “Gen.X-ers” as the largest generation in our nation’s workforce.

Additionally, millennials are the most educated generation in our history while also carrying student loan debt, far greater than their parents and grandparents.

We also learned that a majority of millennials do not believe they will be able to attain the standard of living or the quality of life enjoyed by their parents.

During the June taskforce Mr. Meyer explained that this generation faces entrenched challenges to innovation and advancement that are the result of a federal government that has not recognized and responded to a changing America.

In August I held a field hearing in my district where I spoke to millennials from diverse fields, ranging from advertising to agriculture. These young Americans from New York’s 21st District shared the hopes they have as they start their professional careers, as well as the challenges they face. They shared real world examples of what was discussed and described during our June hearing.

Ethan Allen, a millennial farmer who joined us in August, mentioned the regulatory burdens young farmers face as they look into entering the agricultural field. Other millennials who participated on the panel spoke of the crippling student debt that prevents them from starting new businesses and also the crushing costs of healthcare that make it a challenge to save for retirement.

However, what truly inspired and impressed me was the positivity and this *new way* of looking at the world which this millennial generation exudes.

These are Americans that strive for fulfilling jobs and care about their local communities. They do not shy away from challenges and they want to participate in society, their communities, in the local government…however often feel held back by archaic process and over regulation.

As leaders in Congress we can help with these challenges and we can support and help grow the empowerment economy…to allow young people to bring about economic change for themselves.

Just this past Monday I chaired the third taskforce hearing where we explored how companies are attracting and retaining millennials in their workforce as well as how today’s technology is providing flexible opportunities for millennials to earn money and advance in their careers.

I heard from Google and PricewaterhouseCoopers who shared their thoughts on the empowerment economy. Maisie Clark, from Google, pointed out how flexibility and competitive benefits are enjoyable but at the end of the day it is about empowering workers to succeed and live the lives they desire. Terri McClements from PricewaterhouseCoopers discussed the real-time feedback system at their company that instills open communication and a sense of ownership amongst employees – 80 percent of whom are millennials.

Another witness at the hearing was Uber, which is a great example of the empowerment economy. This company allows for flexibility and allows a full time student to earn a living on their own schedule…or even gives a stay at home mom the opportunity to set her own hours and receive a paycheck to benefit her young family.

By allowing Americans the flexibility to work the hours that fit within their busy daily schedule, companies such as Uber are creating the needed opportunities which are desperately desired by millennials.

Although these task force hearings have primarily focused on the economics of the millennial generation it is critical that we address the student loan debt crisis.

I share the concerns of this committee and many of my House and Senate colleagues. When the most educated generation in our nation’s history cannot start businesses, purchase homes, or save for retirement because they are held back by decades of loan payments we must make it a priority to discuss innovative ways to address this issue.

College affordability will continue to remain a challenge for millennials and future generations. We must work to control the rising cost of tuition, empower students to choose the school that best serves their needs…and have a greater understanding of learning beyond the traditional path of higher education.

This means we need to rethink the way that financial information is disseminated to students so that they can make the best choice as a consumer.

It also means we must consider and support plans to create more flexibility for today’s 21st century student. These students, who often times are veterans, parents or active members of the workforce, do not always have the ability to dedicate two to four years on the traditional education path.

That is why I led the initiative and introduced legislation that would add flexibility to the Pell grant program. Students must have the ability to quickly attain the education they need so they can get back to their busy and productive lives.

I am thankful to have been invited to speak to the committee today and I look forward to an ongoing and productive conversation on how we, as leaders in Congress, can best serve the 80 million millennials across this great nation.