

Speaker Ryan: With tax reform, workers get ahead

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It's been almost six months since the enactment of the biggest tax code overhaul in more than three decades. Already, more than one million jobs have been created in that time. And unemployment is at its lowest level in half a century.

Yet, Democratic leaders say that progress like this “means little” to families. It actually means quite a lot, especially in terms of how it's helping workers get ahead—and we're not just talking about bonuses and bigger paychecks.

In recent months, several companies have announced new investments in lifelong learning programs, credits employees can put toward tuition and books, and partnerships with educational institutions. These benefits are critical, helping employees advance and lay the groundwork for a better future.

Here are some examples:

Boeing: This week, Boeing announced it would invest \$100 million in employee education programs, “the latest step in fulfilling its 2017 pledge to invest \$300 million in employees, infrastructure, and local communities as a result of U.S. tax reform.” The company started a new partnership to provide online educational resources to employees, funds programs to equip employees with necessary skills, and is teaming up with the Thurgood Marshall College Fund and Historically Black Colleges and Universities to support scholarships and technical training. As CEO Dennis Muilenburg tweeted: “Thanks to #taxreform savings, we continue to invest where it matters most—our people.”

McDonald's: Following the passage of the tax law, McDonald's decided to add \$150 million to its Archways to Opportunity program, which provides tuition assistance to

employees. It also expanded the program, making it available to more employees.

Walmart: Walmart began several initiatives to make degrees in relevant areas more accessible to its full-time and part-time employees. Through the program—a collaboration between the company and online education institutions—employees will pay \$1 per day toward their degree, and Walmart will cover remaining tuition expenses, books, and fees. It will also offer college prep classes as part of the initiative, and has recruited an independent party to measure the program's success.

Disney: Disney, citing tax reform, made a new \$50 million investment into an education program for employees to “make higher education more accessible.” Through the program, employees can receive either vocational training or higher education—adding on to existing educational reimbursement programs the company currently offers to full-time workers.

Kroger: In April, Kroger “announced it would ramp up its education benefit programs following the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act.” For both part-time and full-time employees, the company has committed to reimbursing a portion of tuition each year, whether that means a GED, technical school, college, or other career advancement courses. Introducing the new Feed Your Future program, Kroger CEO Rodney McMullen said “We’re offering an investment in our associates’ future.” As Speaker Ryan said this week, “This economic momentum—it doesn’t happen by accident. We don’t just fall into this stuff.” This is what happens when we pass worker-oriented, pro-growth policies. By making the ladder of opportunity a bit easier to climb, these important investments can change Americans’ lives for the better.