Thank you Dr. Faulkner for your commitment to education, and your leadership at this flagship university.

I want to commend Representative McCall for having the vision to author the Technology Workforce Development Act.

I also want to express my gratitude to the members of the private sector who came to the table on this issue. This program works well because companies like Texas Instruments, Advanced Micro Devices, Intel, Motorola and Sabre are helping fund it.

Dr. Ellen Baker, we are honored you could join us. You are a living testament to the importance of training in science and technology, because your expertise allowed you to explore space.

By expanding our engineering and computer science programs, and training more of our bright students in these high-demand fields, Texas will continue to be a national leader in technology, innovation and high-tech job creation.

As we look to the future, technology remains the greatest force for economic progress. Texas must be at the forefront of cultivating new technology, and new forms of innovation, by ensuring a large workforce of trained and skilled workers.

About this time last year, I joined Representative McCall and a number of high-tech leaders to make the pitch for expanding the pool of engineering and computer science graduates coming out of Texas universities.

The reason was simple: knowing that economies are cyclical, we knew that the technology boom would continue in the near future. It appears we are on the verge of that happening again. To take advantage of rapid technology growth, we need to ensure Texas colleges and universities provide the large number of skilled, trained workers to take advantage of technology jobs.

Today, an important investment is being made to expand the technology workforce, and to send the message to technology innovators that Texas is ready, willing and able to be a part of continued growth.

According to the American Electronics Association, technology jobs in Texas pay an average salary of about $64,000
per year, meaning a better quality of life for Texas families, and a better investment returned to Texas schools.

Through the Texas Technology Workforce Development Grant Program, dozens of Texas colleges will receive a mixture of state and private funds to increase enrollment and retention rates in their computer science and engineering programs.

With a total investment of more than $4.5 million in private and state funds, we are making a sizable down payment on a larger pipeline of well-trained and highly prepared graduates.

In fact, I am proud that this innovative approach to enhancing the Texas workforce is a model for a similar idea being considered in Congress in cooperation with the National Science Foundation.

Texas has long been a world leader in technology growth, and today we are taking a significant step toward ensuring the Lone Star State continues to be known as a hotbed for technology innovation.

The Digital Revolution rests on the shoulders of our young students coming out of Texas schools. We must make sure that every young Texan who desires to build the next super-chip, or the next life-saving digital device, has access to the training and expertise available in one of our many great universities.

Too many young students find their dream of an engineering or computer science degree slip away in the first couple of semesters. Starting today, our colleges and universities will have the resources to retain more students, and send more trained Texans to a lifetime of success in the private sector.