



Remarks of Gregory W. Powell

**Jobs for America's Graduates
Leadership Awards Luncheon**

Washington, DC

November 15, 2018

On behalf of the Harold Alfond Foundation, thank you for recognizing our support of JMG. We are delighted to be here with you at your annual luncheon and deeply honored by this award.

Thank you Governor Bevin for your very kind words, and congratulations to all of today's award recipients.

And a special congratulations to all student leaders here for JAG's Leadership Academy program.

Last, but not least, a huge thank you to JAG specialists—they are where the rubber meets the road!

At the Harold Alfond Foundation, we believe, as did Harold Alfond, that “young people are our future.”

In that spirit, our Foundation funds a \$500 college savings account for every Maine child at birth. We believe every child counts and that our nation and its future prosperity depends upon a gainfully employed, educated citizenry with the promise of upward mobility. It's the American dream and it starts with young people.

As Maine native and Georgetown scholar Anthony Carnevale has put it, “To the extent our citizens are not equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to get and keep good jobs relevant to our economic engine, they are denied the genuine social inclusion that is the real test of full citizenship.”

As such, there is no mission nor work more important to our country’s future than the mission and work of Jobs for America’s Graduates—inside the classroom and out.

Today, we believe the work of JAG and its affiliates nationwide is more important than ever before.

In the great state of Maine, as I imagine elsewhere, we see our nation undergoing a dramatic transformation from an industrial to technology and data-driven economy. We are part of a global economy and competition is fierce. With the emergence of artificial intelligence and automation, we see special challenges to build on the American dream for our nation’s middle-class and less-advantaged youth, in particular.

Consider these facts:

- Well over 60% of the jobs of our economy require not only a high school diploma, but higher education attainment in some form;
- Over 60% of our population have not achieved higher education credentials in any form, let alone in disciplines required by the economy;
- Well over 60% of today’s young people from middle-income and low-income families fail to complete higher education;
- And, finally, until recently, 60% of American workers have received no real increase in their income since 1980.

So with over 60% of future jobs requiring higher education, less than 60% of our population having attained higher education, and, until recently, the absence of real wage growth, your mission and work could not be more important. JAG is a critical leader at the center of our future as we look to maintain and build upon the American dream for all Americans.

And that is why in September of this year, the Foundation announced its gift in support of Maine’s JAG program. And, of course, having Craig Larrabee and Kim Lipp at the helm of JAG-Maine didn’t hurt.

Well, it’s been a thrill to be here in our Nation’s capital with its rich political history and with you all for such a great luncheon. Thank you.

So, speaking of rich history, let me leave you with this bit of Maine history.

Up in Maine, it's so cold and the harvest season is so short, that for over 100 years, between 1832-1932, Congressional and State elections in Maine were held in September rather than November like the rest of the country. These September election results in Maine became the bell weather for how the national November Presidential races would turn out.

For 100 years, nearly 80% of all elections could be predicted by the September results in Maine. And thus was born the saying, "As Maine goes, so goes the Nation."

Well, we don't do elections in September anymore, but this September we did announce our \$4.5 million grant to JMG. And, here today in November, we would like to revive the old saying, "As Maine goes, so goes the Nation."

Everyone in this room knows JAG is doing God's work, the great work our Nation must do for our young people and our future. So to all JAG supporters here today and beyond, let's spread the word. The state of Maine is going for JAG. Maine businesses, foundations, and its Legislature are stepping it up. And we want every state and Puerto Rico to come along with us in supporting the great mission and work of Jobs for America's Graduates.

Thank you.