

Governor's Workforce Summit
Cadet Colonel Keaton Spellacy

Thank you, Governor Kemp and distinguished guests, for the opportunity to talk here today about Air Force JROTC.

What if I told you high school students in Georgia are already earning pilot licenses, certifications, and leadership experience that prepare them for tomorrow's workforce?

My name is Keaton Spellacy, and I'm honored to serve as the Corps Commander for the Etowah High School's Air Force JROTC program.

I'm proud to share how our program is shaping students like me—and thousands across our great state—to pursue meaningful, high-demand careers right here at home.

First and foremost, AFJROTC is about leadership. We're a high school class that develops citizens of character dedicated to serving their nation and their communities. Through teamwork, responsibility, and discipline, cadets are gaining the confidence to lead—whether in the military, business, or public service.

Second, AFJROTC is about innovation.

Our world class STEM programs are introducing cadets to aviation, cybersecurity, robotics, and even astronomy—fields driving Georgia's economic growth and future workforce.

Finally, AFJROTC is about career readiness.

From teams like Color Guard or marksmanship, we learn precision, time management, and professionalism—the same qualities needed in any career.

Teams like Raiders and Orienteering teach endurance, problem-solving, and teamwork under pressure—skills that employers value everywhere.

For me, personally, one of the most life-changing opportunities came through being selected nationally to attend the AFJROTC Flight Academy. This past summer, I earned my Private Pilot Certificate in seven weeks at Purdue University's School of Aviation.

That experience opened my eyes to aviation—one of the fastest-growing, high-demand careers in our state and nation.

And I... am not alone.

I've seen classmates discover passions in STEM, earn hundreds of thousands of dollars in scholarships, and achieve certifications that give them direct paths into the military, government, and civilian industries.

Whether it's flying, coding, or leading teams, we're building the precision, discipline, and confidence needed to lead in any field.

At its core, AFJROTC is about building citizens of character—

but it's so much more. It's about preparing students from our foothills to our coast to become tomorrow's leaders, innovators, and workforce.

Together, we are creating the next generation of leaders and innovators.

Together, this is where Georgia's future begins.