

Alfreda:

Well, we've heard a lot today. I'm going to go to my notes here. And I just wanted, before we end, we asked, because there's many of you in the room, and we're grateful that you're here, spent the time with us listening. And so we asked our panelists, since they have such networks and stakeholders, we asked them to come up with some questions that they would like to ask of Lorie and of Mikki. And so let me get to those questions that I have for you. Hold on just a minute.

So if you wouldn't mind just taking a few minutes to answer one of these questions. And this is on behalf of everybody in the room here today. As you've traveled around the district, Lorie, you've been around the district, Mikki, you've been around the country, what are some of the common issues being discussed?

Lorie Logan:

Well, I've had the great pleasure of traveling across the district over the last nine months and held a number of sessions like these. And I think, Alfreda, I would say that they're definitely common themes in all of those discussions. And I think two of them really near term, and then a third one that's related in a structural sense and connected.

The first one of course is on everyone's mind and a high priority for us as policy makers, is inflation. Inflation is too high and far above our target. But in all the conversations that I've been having across the district, I've just been hearing about the challenges of inflation for business leaders and community leaders and families, particularly for those who are on fixed incomes. I've heard about how some organizations are now seeing middle class families come in to use their services where it used to be lower income families, because of the strains... I think I lost it... from inflation. And hearing that just has really solidified, resolved that inflation must be [inaudible 00:02:15] priority right now.

And that is related to, I think the second one. And we heard a lot about that today, which is the labor markets more generally and just how tight they are. And that tightness in the labor market is contributing to the inflation dynamics. And so until we see some change in those underlying dynamics, those inflationary pressures will remain a concern.

We heard today about the tightness we're seeing from teachers and healthcare workers and the need for 4,000 truck drivers in the immediate term. I'd say the third topic is really related to that, and that's the structural challenges of our labor supply. So how do we focus on these issues of education and healthcare in order to prepare our economy for the future so that we all are thriving in that economy?

And I think another topic that's part of that discussion, of course, is immigration and what the appropriate policies can be to really foster a labor market that's really going to be healthy and serve our businesses and our community.

So I think Alfreda, those would be the three themes that I continually hear in those discussions.

Michelle Bowman:

Great. Well, just building on what President Logan has said, Lorie, I think you have really hit it on the head and it sounds like we've been traveling and talking to a lot of the same people.

Lorie Logan:

Same people.

Michelle Bowman:

I speak to a lot of different groups and a lot of different market participants. And in particular, when I speak with bankers, I think what I hear, and I enjoy talking with bankers, especially small and community bankers, because they can really give a flavor across their economic conditions in their regions and their localities where they're working with a number of different people and businesses operating within an economy. The consistent thing that I hear from them is it is a real struggle to find workers, to retain workers, and to continue to maintain their operations at the level that they want to because they can't consistently get people working in those positions. And when they do, they're worried that they're going to lose them. So it's a real focus on that in particular.

And as Lorie also said, inflation continues to be an issue that we're grappling with, especially with FOMC. It continues to be far above our target, and we clearly need to continue to work to bring inflation down.

One thing I am hearing though is that we're still seeing strong economic conditions. When I talk to bankers, they had an expectation from probably last summer that they would begin to start to be more selective with their credit and their investments and offerings of lending opportunities. And I think that's continued. I think there's some expectation that we might see some slowing in economic activity and economic growth. I don't know that we've seen that consistently at this point, but I think bankers are, in particular, continuing to focus on that as a likely condition later in the next year or so, or within the next year or so.

So as we're looking toward the future, I think that's probably something that we will continue to see bankers talking about is not that they don't want to extend credit, it's just that there may not be as many opportunities for them to do.

Alfreda:

Thank you. Is there a specific...

Michelle Bowman:

Uh oh, did we lose you? Do you want mine?

Alfreda:

I'm done now.

Is there a specific message that you would like for community leaders to share? This is your final parting words. Is there anything that you'd like to share with the folks in the room today regarding the goal of Fed Listens or the things of the work that you all do on a daily basis?

Lorie Logan:

I think for me, the important message I would have is that our doors are open, and that listening and hearing from you is critically important. So if you could continue to share that message. I think sometimes people see the Federal Reserve as an organization that may be hard to share those insights with, and it's not. And we want to make sure that we remain a very open and engaged institution. So that's the message I'd want you to share.

And just continuing the themes that we've talked about today about partnership, collaboration, and engagement, because there's so many great things we can do for our communities if we work together in doing that. And I think I just want to continue to have opportunities like the broadband initiative that

we've talked about today, where we're able to bring people together to solve really important problems and find other opportunities in which we can do that.

Michelle Bowman:

I think for me, the benefit of Fed Listens is that we actually get to breathe life into the data that we look at when we're doing our work at the board and at the Federal Reserve system.

One thing that is particularly helpful for me is, as Willie shared, his work that he's doing with workforce development, whether or not you have a degree, is preparing people to participate in the economy through the opportunity to have a skills-focused job. Whether that's from a degree or whether that's just because you have the right training and the opportunity to get that training.

So I think while it's important that the right people go to college, or those people who feel like college is the right opportunity for them, they do have those opportunities, but we don't need everybody to go to college to have a great paying job and to be able to participate equally in the economy and in the workforce.

So the opportunity for me, for Fed Listens, is just to really bring down to a level where you can come up with a story of a human being that leads us to understand why people aren't participating in the workforce, like the lack of childcare. It's either too expensive or they can't find the right space for them and their children and their family. So only one of the members of the partner or parents can have a job because they just can't find the right opportunity or to do that.

So it really helps to give some value and meaning to the work that we do and the gravity of the decisions that we make and how that resonates with real people and families across the country.

Alfreda:

Well, thank you to Governor Bowman, President Logan for being here this afternoon and listening. And thank you all for being here in the room today. It means so much to us for you to have spent your time with us, and we look forward to doing this again soon in some other part of our district. We've enjoyed being here in the Permian Basin. And I would invite you to visit our website at dallasfed.org where you can sign up to virtually participate if the microphones work, to hear live streams, and to also get a lot of our research and information. I do thank the tech guys. Let's give them a hand because it's been a really challenging day.

They were here for hours and sometimes you just, there's interference and it just doesn't work out, but that's okay. Right? So we move on. So once again, thank you for being here today, and we'll see you next time.

Lorie Logan:

Thank you.

Michelle Bowman:

Thank you. This was really fun. [inaudible 00:09:56].

Speaker 4:

Alfreda. Do you think we can grab the panelists for a photo?