



**Opening Statement of Rep Virginia Foxx (R-NC), Chairwoman
Committee on Education and the Workforce Hearing:
“American Education in Crisis”
February 8, 2023**

(As prepared for delivery)

From elementary school to law school, the state of this nation’s education system is deeply troubling at every level. Republicans want transparency and innovative solutions to the problems in our education system, while Democrats want taxpayers to fork over their hard-earned paychecks to empower the D.C. bureaucracy.

One of my top priorities as Chairwoman of the Education and the Workforce Committee is to protect parental rights. During the pandemic, parents saw firsthand how poorly our current K-12 education system is serving students. These parents witnessed the education establishment put the interests of teachers unions over the interests of their children. Parents witnessed educators spreading political ideology instead of teaching fundamental subjects like mathematics and reading. And parents witnessed their children fall further and further behind academically.

This learning loss has been devastating, causing millions of students to lose years of academic progress. The 2022 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) saw scores for nine-year-olds decline five points in reading and seven points in math compared to 2020. This is the largest average decline in reading since 1990 and the first-ever decline in math.

Parents have reason to be angry and should have every opportunity to express their concerns. Instead, they were stonewalled, silenced, and intimidated. Some parents were even forcibly removed from school board meetings, investigated by the FBI, and called domestic terrorists.

This must change. That is why I will champion the *Parents Bill of Rights Act*. Introduced last Congress by Congresswoman Julia Letlow of Louisiana, this legislation will protect the right of parents to know what their child is being taught in the classroom as well as their right to be heard. It is time for the education complex to understand that children belong to their parents, not the state.

Extending education freedom to more students will also be one of my top priorities, as it has been since I came to Congress, and I am pleased to see more parents taking their child's education into their own hands since the pandemic. There has been a surge in the creation of micro-schools, homeschool co-opts, and other innovative forms of education. There has also been a surge in enrollment in charter schools and private schools. This is a good thing. More competition and disruption in the modern education system means all schools will have greater incentives to serve their students well. I am hopeful that this is a topic Republicans and Democrats can work on together, as I know we all want what is best for students.

I will also be working to protect the integrity of Title IX. We must maintain a level playing field for women and girls in sports. This is no game. Many opportunities for girls and women hinge on their participation in sports. Allowing men to take the place of women on sports teams erodes decades of accomplishment and deprives women of these opportunities.

Postsecondary education needs just as much transformation as K-12 education. Yet, the Biden administration is turning our student loan system on its head instead of addressing problems like the rising cost of college and poor student outcomes. Republicans will not stand by while the Biden administration attempts to enact its retroactive free college agenda. As the institution that holds the power of the purse, we have a responsibility to protect the interests of taxpayers and ensure that students are receiving a high-quality education that enables them to repay their loans and be career ready. Republicans plan to pass commonsense legislation that fixes the inherent problems in our federal student loan and accountability systems to protect both borrowers and taxpayers. You will also hear about the necessity for college cost transparency and innovation here today.

We have a tremendous opportunity to advance bold postsecondary education solutions.

Finally, Republicans will also work to improve our nation's workforce development programs and ensure they are delivering the skills development opportunities that workers seek and employers demand. We recognize that a baccalaureate degree is not the appropriate or necessary path for everyone, and we must support all pathways to achieving the American Dream.

Once again, welcome to all new and returning members, I look forward to working with you. Let's make this a productive Congress.

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