



**Opening Statement of Rep. Virginia Foxx (R-NC), Chairwoman
Committee on Education and the Workforce Markup:
“H.R. 824, the Telehealth Benefit Expansion for Workers Act of 2023 and H.R.
3941, the Schools Not Shelters Act”
June 13, 2023**

(As prepared for delivery)

Good afternoon and welcome to the markup of two bills, H.R. 824, the Telehealth Benefit Expansion for Workers Act of 2023, and H.R. 3941, the Schools Not Shelters Act.

As a North Carolinian who grew up in the rural Western outskirts of the state, I know the importance of H.R. 824. Accessing high-quality medical care is not always easy in the mountains.

For my hometown in Watauga County, telehealth has been a lifesaver. During the pandemic, it completely changed the way we met with our primary care providers. Instead of navigating long country roads to the nearest hospital, rural Americans could receive medical care from the comfort of their own living rooms.

Telehealth is a lasting solution to the concerns of accessibility and flexibility, and it's quickly become apparent that it's here to stay. The industry has so much room to grow, but only if Congress lets it.

The Telehealth Benefit Expansion for Workers Act does just that by allowing employers to offer standalone telehealth coverage. In turn, employers can create plans that fit their employees' unique needs, lower costs for everyone, and bring health care access to anyone with a Wi-Fi or smartphone connection. That's health care for the 21st century.

Now on to the second bill, H.R. 3941, the Schools Not Shelters Act.

I'd like to take a moment to recognize that the bill uses the term alien to refer to

illegal immigrants. Despite that being a legal term and despite the Democrats acknowledging that fact, the last markup of similar legislation unraveled into a disagreement regarding the “dehumanizing” history of the word alien.

I, like my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, hold strong convictions on the power and importance of language. Today is not the first day I have made this point.

So, I want to be unequivocal when I say I support using the legally correct term alien rather than the politically correct term undocumented immigrant in this legislation.

Now is not the time to wave the white flag in a semantic battle. Now is especially not the time to substitute longstanding, well-defined immigration language for lighter, fluffier terms. Words have meaning.

Therefore, the bill before us today uses appropriate legal language to identify and resolve one aspect of Biden’s broken border policy. Across the country in blue state strongholds, Democrats are harboring migrants in public school and college facilities. These actions are an unacceptable consequence of the administration’s open border policies, as Americans know that housing the surge of migrants in education facilities is unsustainable and inappropriate.

This bill would put an end to that. It says you can’t house migrants in college dorms. You can’t house illegal immigrants in middle school gyms. You can’t house migrants on any school property if you want your federal funding.

Schoolchildren are at risk of losing precious resources, or worse, at risk of physically being put in harm’s way if we do not pass this bill.

With that, I urge a yes vote on both H.R. 3941 and H.R. 824.