



**Opening Statement of Rep. Virginia Foxx (R-VA), Chairwoman
Committee on Education and the Workforce**

**Markup of H.R. 8932, *FAFSA Deadline Act*; H.R. 2574, *EMS Counts Act*; H.R. 2941, *Recognizing the Role of Direct Support Professionals Act*; H.R. 6319, *Supporting Accurate Views of Emergency Services Act of 2023*; and H.J. Res. 142, *Congressional Review Act* resolution to stop Biden's fiduciary rule
July 10, 2024**

(As prepared for delivery)

Thank you everyone for being here today, and I hope everyone has taken the time to extend a warm welcome to our newest member, Rep. Michael Rulli (R-OH). I hope to make Mr. Rulli's first markup a quick and easy one, as the Committee is meeting to consider five commonsense legislative proposals.

We will first consider a fix to the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, or FAFSA, process. This tool is designed to make postsecondary education accessible and affordable for many students across the United States.

Unfortunately, the Biden administration's failure to implement the new, simplified FAFSA has thrown students, families, and schools into disarray.

Current law recommends FAFSA be released by October 1 but allows the Education Department (ED) to delay the FAFSA release as late as January 1. Last year the Department abused this statutory gap. The administration's abysmal lack of communication about the FAFSA release date was followed by an inept "soft launch," millions of processing errors, and months of additional delays. Even as I speak some FAFSA components for this year are still incomplete and unavailable. Continual FAFSA delays cause great confusion for schools and families and make it difficult for states and nonprofits to process aid packages or award scholarships. ED's lack of communication and transparency shows it learned little from last year's disaster.

Rep. Erin Houchin's (R-IN) H.R. 8932, *FAFSA Deadline Act*, seeks to rectify this by ensuring the 2025-2026 FAFSA is released and fully operational by October 1, 2024. Secretary Cardona has hedged and said that October 1, 2024, is only an "expected" release goal, which is far from the solid commitment that students deserve.

By establishing a hard deadline of October 1, H.R. 8932 will provide students, families, and schools with much-needed clarity and stability. I hope my colleagues agree that our top priority should be to eliminate the possibility of another botched rollout filled with uncertainty and pass H.R. 8932.

Next on the agenda, we turn to a tranche of three bills aimed at fortifying the workforce.

I want to thank Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA) for introducing the first of the three, H.R. 2941, the *Recognizing the Role of Direct Support Professionals Act*. H.R. 2941 addresses the critical shortage of direct support professionals who provide support to individuals with disabilities. This bill will provide federal agencies, states, and the private sector with the data they need to understand and respond to this workforce challenge, without any additional costs to taxpayers.

Next is Rep. Norma Torres's (D-CA) *Supporting Accurate Views of Emergency Services Act of 2023*, or 911 SAVES Act, which aims to reclassify 911 professionals from clerical workers to protective service workers. 911 professionals play a critical role in emergency response as the initial first responder, and reclassification better reflects the lifesaving work they perform.

We will also be marking up a bill introduced by Reps. Susan Wild (D-PA) and G.T. Thompson (R-PA), H.R. 2574, the *EMS Counts Act*. This bipartisan bill addresses the chronic miscounting of emergency medical services personnel by recognizing firefighters who are cross-educated as emergency medical technicians or paramedics. This will help communities throughout the nation better plan for emergencies and disasters.

Data are the foundation for informed decisions, and collecting accurate data across the workforce will help meet our nation's health and safety needs. Together, these

three bills will create a stronger workforce.

Finally, we will be marking up H.J. Res. 142, Rep. Rick Allen's (R-GA) *Congressional Review Act* (CRA) resolution.

The Department of Labor's fiduciary rule, better labeled as the "Retirement Insecurity Rule," represents a reckless overreach by the Biden administration that will have devastating impacts on Americans' retirement savings. It will eliminate options for working-class Americans, reduce their ability to retire, and limit their access to financial advice. One study projects that a rule like this would, over the course of 10 years, reduce the retirement savings of 2.7 million Americans with incomes below \$100,000 by approximately \$140 billion.

Rep. Allen's CRA resolution will end this harmful rule. Congress must protect Americans' freedom to choose how they invest for retirement and ensure they have access to the financial advice they need.

These five bills express the commitment of the Committee to working families, from those on the brink of retirement to those about to send their first child to college. For each life event, American workers deserve flexible and responsive federal policies. That's the promise contained in these five bills.