



COMMITTEE ON  
EDUCATION & LABOR  
REPUBLICANS

COMMITTEE  
STATEMENT

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**Statement on the Republican Substitute to H.R. 2694  
Rep. Virginia Foxx (R-NC), Republican Leader  
Committee on Education and Labor  
Markup of H.R. 2694, *Pregnant Workers Fairness Act* and H.R. 5191, *Runaway  
and Homeless Youth and Trafficking Prevention Act of 2019*  
January 14, 2020**

(As prepared for delivery)

“Republicans support protections in federal law for pregnant workers, and we believe employers should provide reasonable accommodations for pregnant workers. We are supportive of the provisions contained in the Chairman’s Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute which were outlined by Rep. Roe. We’re also appreciative of the negotiations that took place over the last couple of months, and we commend the Chairman for the improvements to H.R. 2694 that have been made to date.

Unfortunately, despite our agreement on these changes, there remains an important outstanding issue which needs to be resolved. The bill should include a narrow but long-standing provision from the *Civil Rights Act* that is not currently incorporated in H.R. 2694 which protects religious organizations from being forced to make employment decisions that conflict with their faith.

This very limited provision is already in current law, and it allows religious organizations to make religiously-based employment decisions.

By not including this long-standing *Civil Rights Act* provision, H.R. 2694 could create legal risk for religious organizations in their religiously-based employment decisions.

In fact, a Democrat-invited witnesses at the hearing on H.R. 2694 highlighted Kentucky’s recently-enacted pregnancy-accommodation law as a template for

Congress to follow. Kentucky's law includes a religious-organization protection very similar to the one found in the *Civil Rights Act*.

At least 16 states and the District of Columbia in their pregnancy-discrimination or pregnancy-accommodation laws also include a provision similar to the *Civil Rights Act* religious-organization protection.

By adding a simple reference in H.R. 2694 to the *Civil Rights Act*, we can harmonize the bill and current law and ensure that religious organizations receive the same protections they already have in the *Civil Rights Act*.

To sum up, my amendment includes Chairman Scott's ANS in its entirety, with one important addition relating to religious-organization protections. My amendment simply incorporates the Title VII religious-organization protection to ensure these organizations are not forced to violate their faith in making employment and accommodation decisions.

If my amendment is adopted, I would be able to support the Chairman's Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute."

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