



COMMITTEE ON  
EDUCATION & LABOR  
REPUBLICANS

COMMITTEE  
STATEMENT

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**Opening Statement of 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)

“Today we are marking up two bills, the *Pregnant Workers Fairness Act* (H.R. 2694) and the *Runaway and Homeless Youth and Trafficking Prevention Act* (H.R. 5191). The first, is an example of bipartisan negotiations and I want to express my appreciation for Chairman Scott’s willingness to work together. Disappointingly, on the second, we were denied the opportunity to engage in bipartisan negotiations to improve the bill.

Regarding H.R. 2694, Committee Republicans have long been committed to policies that empower all Americans to achieve success. Discrimination of any type should not be tolerated, and no one should ever be denied an opportunity because of unlawful discrimination.

That is why there are important protections under federal law to prevent workplace discrimination, including federal laws that protect pregnant workers.

Republicans in Congress have long supported meaningful and clearly-defined protections for pregnant workers that ensure they are not being unlawfully discriminated against as it relates to pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions.

Significant progress has been made negotiating a bipartisan compromise on H.R. 2694 and I commend Chairman Scott for his willingness to entertain these discussions. Unfortunately, one major issue remains. The legislation we will

consider could result in religious organizations being denied protections they receive under current law.

I plan to address this issue in greater detail during the markup and look forward to continuing efforts to build on the progress that has been made to date and to secure a bipartisan compromise on H.R. 2694.

Now I'll turn to the other bill we will discuss today – the *Runaway and Homeless Youth and Trafficking Prevention Act of 2019*.

Our children are this country's most valuable asset. Unfortunately, they are also the most vulnerable in our society.

For homeless and runaway youth there are devastating dangers and risks that can compromise their safety and health. Sadly, reports indicate that in the United States around 700,000 youth are without homes. As lawmakers, we must help protect American youth from the dangers homelessness presents.

In 2018, Congress enacted a short reauthorization of the *Runaway and Homeless Youth Act* to continue to provide services to runaway and homeless youth, including outreach and education for sexual abuse or trafficking victims. Committee Republicans support a longer reauthorization of these important programs now.

Unfortunately, Committee Republicans were denied an opportunity to engage in bipartisan discussions to address the failings of the Democrat legislation before us today that reauthorizes these important programs.

The Democrats' bill promises funding levels they know will never be reached during the life of the reauthorization. The bill also fails to include important accountability measures.

That is why we will offer an amendment that updates RHYA to better address issues runaway and homeless youth face, with a specific focus on helping youth harmed by sexual exploitation and substance use disorder. Specifically, our legislative language will:

- better help youth harmed by sexual exploitation and substance use disorder;
- require grantees to follow non-discrimination laws; and

- protect taxpayer dollars from waste, fraud, and abuse.

I look forward to further discussing both H.R. 2694 and H.R. 5191, including the commonsense solutions Republican members will offer.”

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