



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 Hearing:  
"Examining the Policies and Priorities of the U.S. Department of Labor"  
June 9, 2021**

(As prepared for delivery)

“A post-pandemic nation requires political leaders who support job creation and stand for all workers’ interests, not special interests. Workers want to provide for their families and participate in what was until last year the most robust and dynamic economy in the world. Sadly, the Democrats’ permanent pandemic status quo continues to inflict severe emotional and financial stress on Americans. People crave a reason to be optimistic about the future.

Unfortunately, President Biden’s proposed budget puts Washington’s political class ahead of the working class.

The Department of Labor’s job-killing agenda comes at the worst possible time. Just yesterday, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that job openings reached a record high of 9.3 million in April, while hiring lags far behind. Employers are desperate to fill good-paying jobs, but qualified workers are hard to find. Earn-and-learn models teach valuable skills and allow people to collect a paycheck at the same time. Yet Secretary Walsh shut down a popular industry-led apprenticeship model in one of his first decisions after taking office.

If only DOL’s anti-worker agenda stopped there, but that was simply the first wave. The tide of terrible decisions rose higher. Democrats spent trillions of our grandchildren’s dollars on so-called stimulus policies. They expected massive growth. Instead, they are making excuses for one lackluster jobs report after another. Through their ill-advised and damaging unemployment insurance scheme, Democrats wound up creating an incentive for healthy Americans to stay

home. It is not our constituents' fault. They are merely taking the better deal. Eight-hour shifts are pointless when one can collect a perversely large unemployment check from the government. The Democrat's ill-conceived spending spree stripped away the dignity that comes from earning a paycheck.

The Department of Labor then unleashed an ongoing tsunami which is obliterating the positive policy initiatives of the Trump administration. Along with pushing an unnecessary and ill-timed, one-size-fits-all national "emergency" COVID-19 regulation; supporting a socialist health care agenda; denying American workers the opportunities to choose when, where, and how they work; and infringing on religious liberty, the Biden administration has provoked a strong sense of uncertainty among America's workers and job creators with its job-killing agenda.

The Biden regulatory whiplash is manifest in our lethargic economic recovery. Job creators need certainty and flexibility from federal policymakers. Aggressive and punitive regulatory actions, coupled with competition from the government for workers' paychecks, place unsustainable costs on small businesses. Entrepreneurs propel our economy forward by creating jobs. Burying these burgeoning businesses in an avalanche of red tape hampers job creation. But that fact isn't stopping the Biden administration from planning a deluge of detrimental regulations.

Perhaps most frustrating to our fellow citizens trying to build a better life for themselves is the Democrats' unabashed union favoritism. Democrats wasted no time gratifying the whims of Big Labor after taking hold the levers of federal power. I'll give them credit; House Democrats know how to reward those who butter their bread. The problem is they do so at the expense of American workers. In the first 150 days of the year, my colleagues on the other side of the aisle moved legislation to override the democratic will of the people by eliminating states' right to work laws and stripping essential privacy protections from workers. They promoted a \$15 national minimum wage—a radical proposal the Congressional Budget Office estimates will dump millions of workers in the unemployment line. Democrats continued to take care of Big Labor with a shameful taxpayer-funded pension bailout. The Democrats' radical Pro Union Bosses Act institutes government-mandated union pickpocketing. The PRO Act skims the top off workers' wages regardless of whether they choose to be represented by a union and transfers that money into the pockets of union

organizers. Stealing from the poor to give to the rich is hardly progressive policymaking. Democrats trampled on American workers in their stampede to appease their political allies. And the latest Biden budget continues the betrayal of the working class.

It doesn't have to be this way. It shouldn't be this way. We can work together for families. Republican policies facilitated unprecedented financial success for all Americans before COVID-19 devastated the world economy. The economic hangover created by the pandemic does not have to last forever. We could return to the dynamic growth of 2019 if Democrats acted in bipartisan good faith. Republicans have effective ideas to lower drug prices, offer reskilling opportunities for the workforce, and break down regulatory barriers to entrepreneurial success. But it requires willingness from the Democrats to work across the aisle. It requires an interest in elevating everyone, not just partisan allies.

Secretary Walsh has much to explain today, and I look forward to hearing his testimony.”

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