



COMMITTEE ON
**EDUCATION
& LABOR**
REPUBLICANS

**COMMITTEE
STATEMENT**

**Opening Statement of Rep. Virginia Foxx (R-NC), Republican Leader
Committee on Education and Labor
Markup of FY 2022 Budget Reconciliation
September 9, 2021**

(As prepared for delivery)

“2021 is already one of the most expensive years on record for working Americans. Inflation is up more than seven percent since President Biden took office. For business owners, families, and retirees on a fixed income, that means up to seven percent less food on the table, gas in the car, or funds set aside for a rainy day.

Yet, Democrats are dipping into taxpayers’ wallets to give another socialist handout to liberal special interests.

More government spending is not the answer to a spending-induced inflation crisis. The Biden administration and its allies are asking Americans to pay for their failed programs twice: once with taxes from workers’ personal paychecks and again at gas pumps and grocery stores.

And it is not just today’s taxpayers that will be on the hook for these programs. This monstrosity recklessly increases what was already the highest sustained spending level in American history. Allocating billions of dollars to radical left-wing proposals will harm our economy now and obliterate economic prosperity in the future.

We cannot place a brick on Biden’s inflation gas pedal. We cannot ask our grandchildren to pay for our irresponsibility. This latest irresponsible spending proposal would do both. To add insult to injury, Democrats think they know best how to spend taxpayer’s money.

Whenever I vote on how to spend hard-working taxpayers' dollars, I ask myself a simple question: can I honestly tell my relatives, who live at the end of a dirt road in 40-year-old single-wide trailers, that I am spending their money better than they could?

In this case, the answer is a resounding no.

My relatives – like the majority of Americans – would not support subsidizing the education of illegal immigrants and millionaires when they did not attend college themselves. Moreover, the current Pell Grant more than covers community college tuition for many recipients, meaning that two years of education is already free for those most in need even before the Democrats' irresponsible increase in this bill.

The bill adds not one but two giant child care initiatives run essentially by federal bureaucrats. States, local communities, and families - not the federal government - are best positioned to make child care decisions and we should not pass anything that jeopardizes that opportunity. We should be focused on ensuring hard working taxpayers can find the best care for their children rather than blindly throwing money at the problem and calling it a solution.

The deeper we dig, the more we find that this bill truly is a solution in search of a problem. Despite 76 percent of public school buildings being in "good" or "excellent" condition, Democrats want to shove \$80.6 billion towards school construction. But this money comes with strings – like federal wage requirements that drive up costs to local taxpayers. Schools need flexibility to tailor local solutions to local problems, not a rigid set of bureaucratic standards.

The education provisions in this bill hurt Americans from all walks of life. And the workforce provisions mirror that hardship.

It is asinine to propose job-killing measures as the economy is recovering from COVID-19 and businesses are struggling to regain pre-pandemic prosperity. The bill provides a whopping \$2.6 billion in additional funding for the Labor Department, the National Labor Relations Board and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission for activities which will surely unleash a wave of vindictive enforcement against unsuspecting small businesses.

The PRO Union Bosses Act was dead upon arrival in the Senate, so Speaker Pelosi and Committee Democrats are manipulating the legislative process to enact portions of that anti-worker legislation which hold job creators personally responsible through excessive financial penalties. Union bosses aren't held to the same standards. They were specifically written out of this legislation because they have the Democrat party in their back pockets.

Additionally, the Democrats flawed legislation includes a series of unprecedented increases in civil monetary penalties against job creators. In fact, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration penalties for violations will be increased by 512 percent. Clearly, Democrats are determined to put private business out of business.

I am just scratching the surface of the radical provisions in this bill, and Republicans intend to introduce common-sense amendments today that will increase Americans' freedoms, rein in runaway spending, encourage excellence in our schools and workforce, protect small businesses from government overreach, and reenforce the United States' premiere status in the world without burdening future generations with unsustainable debt.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back."

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