



COMMITTEE ON
**EDUCATION
& LABOR**
REPUBLICANS

**COMMITTEE
STATEMENT**

**Opening Statement of Rep. Virginia Foxx (R-NC), Republican Leader
Committee on Education and Labor
Markup of H.R. 7, H.R. 1065, and H.R. 1195
March 24, 2021**

(As prepared for delivery)

“All Members of this Committee agree on the fundamental premise behind each bill we are discussing today. Women should not be paid less than men for the same work; pregnant workers deserve equal protection under the law; and all workers, especially those in health care and social services, deserve to be safe and protected at work.

These basic, underlying principles are not up for debate. That said, Committee Republicans are not in the business of passing radical and prescriptive bills just to get flashy headlines and score political points. We are equally committed to promoting both fairness and strong policymaking, and when judged by these standards, each of today’s bills fall short.

In 1963 and 1978, federal protections against pay discrimination and pregnancy discrimination, respectively, were signed into law. Since then, the number of women in the workforce has skyrocketed, with female employees making up 50.4 percent of the pre-covid workforce. As of 2015, a record 60 percent of pregnant women continued to work while pregnant with their first child.

Without those necessary protections, women’s workforce advancement would not have been possible. Democrats claim the Paycheck Fairness Act makes it easier for women to excel in the workforce, but it is a dangerous bill that will allow trial lawyers to fleece business owners around the country.

Instead of treating pay discrimination allegations with the seriousness they

deserve, the so-called Paycheck Fairness Act is designed to make it easier for trial lawyers to bring more suits of questionable validity for the purpose of siphoning off unlimited paydays from settlements and jury awards, lining their own pockets and dragging women through tedious, never-ending legal proceedings.

Another bill before us today, the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act includes several improvements which we negotiated last Congress when a previous version of the legislation was considered. However, H.R. 1065 still omits a current-law protection for religious organizations which could force religious employers to act against their deeply held beliefs. That is why I will be offering a substitute amendment that will incorporate the full text of H.R. 1065 and ensure both pregnant workers and religious organizations retain the civil rights protections they deserve.

We are also considering a bill which purports to address workplace violence in health care and social services workplaces. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has recognized the hazards and risks that exist in these settings and is currently working to address this important issue through rulemaking.

Addressing workplace violence in health care and social services settings is crucial, but forcing OSHA to issue a hasty regulation by allowing shortcuts in the proper regulatory process could have a devastating impact on the health care industry, which is currently responding to a once-in-a-century pandemic and is expected to be subject to new, burdensome OSHA regulations from the Biden administration on COVID-19 in the near future.

Rather than enforce a rushed and prescriptive standard that does not include appropriate public feedback or analysis, Committee Republicans believe workers deserve a responsible, workable, and thorough solution to this serious issue. This solution can only be reached by allowing OSHA to issue a standard through the normal rulemaking process, which brings all experts and parties to the table.

I will not criticize the intentions behind the legislation we are debating today. But good intentions do not necessarily breed good policymaking.

I look forward to debating the merits of the three bills before us and the Republican amendments that will be offered today which propose meaningful

improvements to the bills before us today.”

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