



COMMITTEE STATEMENT

Opening Statement of Rep. Ryan Mackenzie (R-PA), Chairman
Subcommittee on Workforce Protection
“Reclaiming OSHA’s Mission: Ensuring Safety Without Overreach”
May 15, 2025

(As prepared for delivery)

Today’s hearing will review the Occupational Safety and Health Administration’s (OSHA) activity under the previous administration and will also explore common-sense solutions that can return OSHA to fulfilling its purpose of advancing workplace safety.

OSHA’s mission is to ensure the hard-working men and women of this nation are given safe and healthy working conditions. The agency fulfills this mission by setting and enforcing safety standards and by providing education, outreach, and compliance assistance to both employers and employees. When necessary, OSHA’s enforcement efforts include monetary and even criminal penalties—all with the goal of protecting workers.

That mission is critically important. However, in recent years, we’ve seen a regulatory approach that, in many cases, may have gone beyond OSHA’s statutory authority under the Occupational Safety and Health Act. While these actions may have been well-intentioned, they often created confusion or imposed overly broad mandates that didn’t meet the realities of the industries affected—especially for small businesses.

For example, OSHA’s attempt to implement a nationwide COVID vaccine mandate—later struck down by the Supreme Court—raised

serious concerns about federal overreach; In 2024, the agency issued the “worker walkaround” rule, which opens the door to third-party individuals—including union representatives with no workplace safety background—entering jobsites; And the proposed heat standard, while addressing a real concern, takes a one-size-fits-all approach that fails to account for the wide range of conditions across different industries and regions.

We’ve also seen an expansion of enforcement tools, such as the Severe Violator Enforcement Program and the instance-by-instance citation policy, that may reflect a view of employers as adversaries rather than partners in workplace safety. That’s a misguided perspective. Small businesses succeed when their employees succeed, and most of these employers take worker safety seriously.

OSHA’s mission is too important to be undermined by overreach. As the nature of work continues to change, broad-based regulatory efforts can unintentionally create more problems than they solve. That’s why today’s conversation is so important.

For instance, the tree care industry has petitioned for the creation of a federal tree care standard for nearly two decades. This is one of the most dangerous industries in the nation, but workers currently rely on a patchwork of standards that do not adequately address the unique challenges of the work being performed.

Similarly, because of technological advancements with equipment and machinery, OSHA should update its 35-year-old standard on the control of hazardous energy, otherwise known as the lockout/tagout standard. While we saw progress on both fronts under the first Trump administration, now is the time to push these solutions forward. Republicans understand that America flourishes when her workers flourish.

I look forward to hearing from today's witnesses about what can be improved from the past four years, the lessons we've learned, and how we can keep OSHA focused on its core mission of keeping America's workers safe.

With that, I yield to the Ranking Member for an opening statement.