



COMMITTEE ON
EDUCATION & LABOR
REPUBLICANS

COMMITTEE
STATEMENT

**Statement on the Democrat Substitute to H.R. 5191
Rep. Fred Keller (R-PA)
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)

“Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As has been emblematic of the House Majority this session, we are once again considering a partisan messaging bill.

And as Republican leader Dr. Foxx said earlier, Republicans were never afforded an opportunity to work in a bipartisan manner on this bill.

That’s unfortunate for two reasons:

First, there are many problems with the underlying text of this bill that could have and should have been addressed.

Second, and this is why it is particularly frustrating that we were not allowed an opportunity to work on this bill in a bipartisan manner: We actually agree with our colleagues on the other side of the aisle that we should help protect American youth from the dangers homelessness presents.

Sadly, we know that in the United States around 700,000 youth are homeless. These children face devastating dangers and risks that can compromise their safety and health.

Unfortunately, but not surprisingly, it appears the majority’s amendment in the nature of a substitute does not improve their partisan legislation.

First, the spending levels in the amendment are beyond unreasonable. We owe it to the runaway and homeless youth seeking help, the grantees providing critical services, and the taxpayers to be more honest about the funding that will be made available. Yet, the Democrats make promises on funding they know will not be met. Current appropriations have not yet hit even the authorized levels in current law, let alone the unrealistic levels included in this proposed legislation. By increasing the authorizations in current law, the Democrats are promising money that grantees will never see and breaking the number one rule of success by not aligning expectations with reality.

Second, is the lack of accountability in this amendment in the nature of a substitute. We also owe it to these individuals to ensure we have accountability measures in place. Unfortunately, the underlying bill, does not include simple, bipartisan language that would help protect both participants in the programs and taxpayers.

In contrast, the Republican amendment implements key accountability measures, making the bill a more responsible approach.

For example, the Republican amendment ensures that grantees who are not meeting their purpose will not continue to receive grants. As responsible stewards of taxpayer dollars, the federal government should not be in the business of funding grantees who fail to do what they said they would and fail to appropriately serve the youth that need help.

By only funding programs that work and provide needed services, we serve the American taxpayer better and they can have our assurances that their hard-earned tax dollars will be spent efficiently and effectively.

I look forward to hearing my colleagues speak further about the Republican substitute, as it puts forward productive and commonsense policy that includes accountability measures Democrats failed to address.

I strongly urge my colleagues to vote no on the Democrats' amendment in the nature of a substitute."

###