



**Opening Statement of Rep. Virginia Foxx (R-NC), Chairwoman
Committee on Education and the Workforce**

**Markup of H.J. Res. 116, Providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Department of the Labor relating to "Employee or Independent Contractor Classification Under the Fair Labor Standards Act"; H.R. 6418, the *Empower Charter School Educators to Lead Act*; H.R. 3724, the *Accreditation for College Excellence Act of 2023*; and H.R. 7683, the *Respecting the First Amendment on Campus Act*
March 21, 2024**

(As prepared for delivery)

The Committee is meeting today to discuss four great measures on the agenda.

Thank you to my colleagues, Reps. Owens, Williams, Letlow, and Kiley, for taking the lead on these measures and putting in the hard work in the drafting process.

Thanks to each individual Member's efforts, the Committee is building an impressive record in the 118th Congress. We are fulfilling our duty as Members of the People's House and delivering legislative solutions for our constituents.

On education issues, the Committee has produced bill after bill that strengthens parents' rights, lowers college costs, and emphasizes greater student achievement.

Now, the Committee has three more education bills to consider. These bills are a stake in the ground. They say: the Committee will not surrender our schools to either the woke ideologues or the ballooning education bureaucracy.

While the Left-wing capture of institutions is of great concern to my side of the aisle, we should be careful not to beat the Left by becoming the Left. Public colleges should not adhere to a certain ideology, Right or Left, but rather maintain viewpoint neutrality.

Rep. Owens' *Accreditation for College Excellence Act* ensures colleges are not forced to commit to the principles of DEI to receive accreditation. No institution should be required to conform to a politically charged ideology to gain access to federal financial aid.

Moreover, Rep. Williams' *Respecting the First Amendment on Campus Act* ensures the full sweep of the First Amendment is adhered to by public college campuses. This means no more compelling students and faculty to make commitments to ideologies through political litmus tests for admissions and hiring, no more religious discrimination, and no more restrictive "free speech zones."

The entirety of a public university campus should be a "free speech zone" where students are exposed to different opinions, learn how to debate contested ideas, think critically, and discover truth. Together, these bills will achieve that mission.

Today, we will also consider the bipartisan *Empower Charter School Educators to Lead Act* authored by Rep. Letlow. This legislation embraces the themes of increased freedom and educational opportunity at the elementary and secondary level.

Charter schools are bastions of innovation and choice in a public education ecosystem otherwise dominated by bureaucracy and entrenched special interests. This bill will unleash the full potential of charters by allowing a modest amount of federal funds to aid the application process. It does so without adding a single dollar in new spending.

I urge every Member to support these three education priorities.

On workforce issues, the Committee has built a strong reputation for protecting workers from regulatory overreach by an activist Department of Labor (DOL). Today, we will grow that reputation by passing Rep. Kiley's *Congressional Review Act* resolution.

Under no previous administration has the ability for American free enterprise been more under attack. What's more, the fundamental right for workers to earn an honest living on their own terms is even at stake. Allowing for entrepreneurship through pursuits such as independent contracting is how we will repair the American economy, not through bad government regulations that destroy the freedom to work independently.

Effective March 11, the Biden DOL issued a rule that threatens to eliminate the livelihoods of tens of millions of independent contractors across the country. Independent contracting is the preferred model for so many because it affords workers the flexibility to control their own careers and work-life balance.

It is imperative that the Committee stands as a bulwark against the DOL's independent contractor overreach. Therefore, I support Rep. Kiley's Congressional Review Act resolution to disapprove of the rule and to return to the previous rule that has allowed millions of American entrepreneurs to continue earning a living in the method that they prefer.

With that, I want to say thank you again to each of my colleagues for leading on these measures, and I look forward to delivering them to the full House for consideration.