



COMMITTEE ON
EDUCATION & LABOR
REPUBLICANS

COMMITTEE
STATEMENT

Statement on the Democrat Substitute to H.R. 8294
Rep. Virginia Foxx (R-NC), Republican Leader
Committee on Education and Labor
Markup of H.R. 8294, *National Apprenticeship Act of 2020*
September 24, 2020

(As prepared for delivery)

“Republicans and Democrats agree that updating the *National Apprenticeship Act* and expanding apprenticeship opportunities for workers nationwide is a priority for this Committee.

The bill before us today, H.R. 8294, had a shot at being a bipartisan solution, one that works toward our shared goal of bridging the gap between the education and business communities. I thank the Chairman and Ms. Davis for their willingness to engage in meaningful negotiations with Committee Republicans, but unfortunately, we find ourselves in a very familiar situation where the majority has once again chosen partisanship over compromise.

The *National Apprenticeship Act of 2020* includes many provisions for reforming the traditional registered apprenticeship system, but disappointingly forecloses on the opportunity for improvement or other innovation in the future. Narrowminded legislating will always result in shortsighted objectives. Now, more than ever, our objectives need to be bigger, bolder.

This is not the time for a Washington-knows-best-approach that will force job creators to deal with overly prescriptive requirements, additional bureaucracy, and time-consuming paperwork. That kind of stifling environment has discouraged new and small businesses from participating in the registered apprenticeship system for years now.

If we truly want to provide workers with opportunities to learn the skills they need for high-wage, high-skill, and in-demand jobs that will lead to fulfilling careers, we must also acknowledge that while the registered apprenticeship system created during the Great Depression has been useful for many and can be further improved, it will never be adequate by itself.

The Trump administration recognizes this and has taken important steps to expand and innovate work-based learning programs. More than 430 companies and organizations have signed the president's Pledge to America's Workers, committing to provide more than 16 million new education and on-the-job learning opportunities for American students and workers. Additionally, the Department of Labor is moving forward with Industry-Recognized Apprenticeship Programs to give employers more authority to shape apprenticeship programs that will attract workers and prepare them for meaningful work.

We have urged our Democrat colleagues to build on these efforts and expand much needed work-based learning programs. Regrettably, as with so much else that this committee and this House has passed this Congress, our Democrat friends can't look beyond the status quo.

Instead of acknowledging that giving workers and employers more autonomy to create programs that are responsive to workforce needs will benefit everyone, Democrats want to cling to an 80-year-old system and falsely claim it is the only way to utilize apprenticeships to prepare workers for a successful career.

The economy and the workforce have evolved tremendously in the last 80 years. It is past time our apprenticeship system evolved with it. For that reason, I must reluctantly urge my colleagues to oppose this Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute, return to the negotiating table, listen to workers and employers, and produce legislation that will empower workers and employers to actually create apprenticeships that are responsive to our modern economy."

###