



COMMITTEE ON
EDUCATION & LABOR
REPUBLICANS

COMMITTEE
STATEMENT

**Opening Statement of Rep. Tim Walberg (R-MI), Republican Leader
Subcommittee on Health, Employment, Labor, and Pensions Joint Hearing:
“The Future of Work: Preserving Worker Protections in the Modern Economy”
October 23, 2019**

(As prepared for delivery)

“Today, we are here to discuss the future of work. With the ever-evolving economic landscape, it is an important issue for us to consider. Yet I find it ironic given Committee Democrats recently passed radical legislation that would take our labor laws back to the 1930s.

My colleagues across the aisle believe that forcing workers into labor unions is the only way to ensure proper wages and benefits, so federal law should promote unions even at the expense of workers’ own rights and freedoms. Democrats’ ultimate goal is to all but eliminate independent-contractor status, classifying as many workers as possible as employees in order to subject them to unionization.

Labor union membership continues to plummet due to the modern economy, economic growth, and unions’ own failings. Instead of increasing transparency and accountability to serve their members better, union leaders are exerting their political influence to push backward-looking radical labor laws that would allow them to consolidate power further, coerce workers, line their own pockets, and bolster their own agendas while depriving workers of freedom, flexibility, and innovation in the workplace. The Democrats’ reforms would take us back to the past while harming workers, businesses, and the economy as a whole at a time when economic growth and innovation are creating real progress and prosperity for American workers.

That is why Committee Democrats recently approved, H.R. 2474, far-reaching legislation which limits the rights of workers to make free and informed decisions. This is not what the future of work in America should look like. There is nothing ‘progressive’ about what will be discussed during this hearing.

Instead of considering unworkable policies that will harm workers and businesses, we should be discussing ways to encourage flexible work arrangements and access to employer-sponsored benefits without creating costly and restrictive mandates. These are the kind of reforms necessary to adapt our laws for the future of work.

For example, multiple-employer plans should allow small employers to join together to sponsor a single retirement plan for employees, which would significantly reduce costs for employers who might not otherwise be able to afford offering retirement benefits. Additionally, Committee Republicans have long championed the expansion of association health plans, which allow small businesses to join together to provide their employees with high-quality health care at more affordable costs. These are just two examples of innovative reforms that meet the needs of a 21st century workforce.

American workers are benefitting from the strong economy ushered in by Republican-led tax and regulatory reform. Wages are rising, unemployment is at near-record lows, and millions of jobs have been created since President Trump took office. Individual freedom and pro-growth economic policies create the best path forward for workers and job-seekers, not more coercion and red tape.”

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