



COMMITTEE ON
EDUCATION & LABOR
REPUBLICANS

COMMITTEE
STATEMENT

**Opening Statement of Rep. James Comer (R-KY), Republican Leader
Subcommittee on Civil Rights and Human Services Hearing:
“Long Over Due: Exploring the Pregnant Workers’ Fairness Act (H.R. 2694)”
October 22, 2019**

(As prepared for delivery)

“I want to thank all the witnesses, including my fellow Kentuckian, for being here today.

Committee Republicans have long been committed to policies and laws that empower all Americans to achieve success.

Discrimination of any type should not be tolerated, and no one should ever be denied an opportunity because of unlawful discrimination. That is why there are important protections under federal law to prevent workplace discrimination, including federal laws that protect pregnant workers. The *Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)* provides protections to pregnant workers; the *Pregnancy Discrimination Act* outlaws pregnancy discrimination; a 2015 Supreme Court ruling affirmed that employers must treat pregnant workers equally and fairly; and states, including my state of Kentucky, have passed laws protecting pregnant workers. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the primary federal agency that enforces civil rights laws against workplace discrimination, has stated that the ADA requires employers to accommodate pregnancy-related limitations.

Republicans in Congress have long supported meaningful and clearly-defined protections for pregnant workers that ensure they are not being unlawfully discriminated against as it relates to pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions. We should promote policies in Washington that encourage a strong family, allow families to flourish, and protect life at all stages.

The purpose of America's nondiscrimination laws, and the agencies enforcing them, is to give all Americans equal opportunities to succeed. That being said, overzealous government intervention often causes more harm than good. While we are committed to preventing and combating unlawful discrimination, we should carefully examine legislation that could cause confusion and prove difficult to implement.

We should prioritize discrimination policies that are responsible and effective so our nation's workers and job creators can flourish, and America's workplaces can be free from discrimination.

The Committee should review and evaluate the federal laws already on the books that provide protections for pregnant workers, as well as the specific provisions in H.R. 2694, before advancing legislation that could have unexpected consequences. The hearing today is a starting point in this regard.

Bottom line, pregnant workers should be protected and reasonably accommodated in the workplace.

So, I look forward to hearing from our witnesses today as we examine the *Pregnant Workers Fairness Act.*"

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