



COMMITTEE STATEMENT

Opening Statement of Rep. Virginia Foxx (R-NC), Republican Leader Committee on Education and Labor Organizational Meeting: February 8, 2020

(As prepared for delivery)

"I'd like to begin by taking a moment to honor Rep. Ron Wright, a beloved member of this Committee. His work ethic, dedication, patriotism, and passion for public service – which started long before he was a Member of Congress when he worked as a congressional staffer – will leave a lasting mark on all of us for years to come.

Mr. Chairman, congratulations on retaining your role as Chair of the House Education and Labor Committee. I am confident that our positive working relationship in years past can serve as a benchmark for future bipartisan achievements as we hit the ground running this Congress.

I want to also welcome our new and returning Members on both sides of the dais. I look forward to working with all of you as we begin our official Committee work for the 117th Congress.

I've always believed that this is the best Committee in Congress, not only because we have so many great Members, but also because we address some of the most pressing issues facing American students, workers, and families today, especially in the face of a public health emergency.

Our work on this Committee is more important than ever as we continue to combat COVID-19 and help hardworking Americans, small businesses, and schools recover. The pandemic's challenges, while unprecedented, demanded congressional action to help Americans suffering from the health and economic consequences of the coronavirus. In fact, many of the Members in this room

played an integral role in getting the bipartisan Families First Coronavirus Response Act, the CARES Act, and the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act to President Trump's desk for signature – delivering much needed relief to American families.

In times of economic prosperity, as well as in times of crisis, Congress should work to ensure that the federal government meets its obligations to the American people. But as we work to address the challenges of this problem I want to remind my colleagues of the words so aptly written by the Wall Street Journal, 'government's role in this crisis should be to address a genuine short-term hardship, not to permanently expand the size of government and the burden on taxpayers.'

While I'm proud of this Committee's bipartisan accomplishments such as strengthening federal efforts to support older Americans through the Older Americans Act, I do have major concerns about the precedent that has already been set for this Congress. Just last week, Democrats silenced the voices of every Republican Member of the Committee, including every freshman Member here, and their constituents by unilaterally deciding to bring the National Apprenticeship Act of 2021 to the House floor without Committee consideration.

All legislation deserves a proper, thorough, and bipartisan examination, which is why the House has long-established procedures to do just that. Those procedures respect the majority and minority and ensure that both sides are represented. Moving this bill or any others without a markup is an affront to the rights of the minority.

Tomorrow we are being asked to consider broad, sweeping legislation that will impact nearly every facet of our society. What's worse, we received the bill less than two hours ago, which includes significant and partisan policy proposals.

This kind of rushed and sloppy legislating sets a troubling trend; one I hope is not indicative of the way the majority intends to legislate.

It's now my pleasure to introduce the new faces on our side of the dais. As we've spent some time getting to know each other and talking about the work of this Committee, I have been impressed with the level of enthusiasm our new Members have shown.

I'm pleased to introduce:

- Representative Mariannette Miller-Meeks of Iowa;
- Representative Burgess Owens of Utah;
- Representative Bob Good of Virginia;
- Representative Lisa McClain of Michigan;
- Representative Diana Harshbarger of Tennessee;
- Representative Mary Miller of Illinois;
- Representative Victoria Spartz of Indiana;
- Representative Scott Fitzgerald of Wisconsin;
- Representative Madison Cawthorn, a fellow North Carolinian; and
- Representative Michelle Steel of California.

One Member who is not new to Congress, or the Committee for that matter, but I'm excited to have re-joining us is Representative Joe Wilson from South Carolina.

It's also a pleasure to welcome our returning Republican Members. With their proven records of legislative accomplishments, I know we will all benefit from their continued service on the Committee: Mr. Thompson, Mr. Walberg, Mr. Grothman, Ms. Stefanik, Mr. Allen, Mr. Banks, Mr. Comer, Mr. Fulcher, Mr. Keller, and Dr. Murphy.

Mr. Chairman, let me close by saying I very much appreciated your efforts to make this a model committee last Congress, and I will join you in those efforts again this Congress. To do so we all must follow the rules of this body to act respectfully toward each other and our witnesses. All of us on the Republican side of the dais are committed to doing the work of this Committee in a respectful and cooperative manner. I look forward to having this Committee continue to be an example of how to disagree, but not be disagreeable."

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