

Opening Statement of Ranking Member Scott (VA-03)

Full Committee Organizing Meeting
Wednesday, January 15, 2025 | 10:15 a.m.

Thank you, Mr. Walberg, and congratulations on being selected as the Committee's leader for the next two years. I would also like to congratulate the outgoing chair, Dr. Foxx, on her selection as chair of the Rules Committee.

It is a pleasure to welcome Members on both sides of the aisle to the Committee. I am particularly excited to see many new faces. On our side, I would like to acknowledge our new Members: from Texas, a former member of the Austin City Council, Greg Casar; from Pennsylvania, lawyer and former state legislator Summer Lee; and from New York, state legislator and longtime teacher John Mannion.

As we formally begin our work for the 119th Congress, I would like to acknowledge the significant progress we made on behalf of students, workers, and families under the Biden-Harris Administration. In the last four years, we have added 16.6 million jobs to the economy, setting the record for any President in a four-year term and, in fact, more than any Republican President, whether they served four or eight years. The Biden-Harris Administration also reduced unemployment to historic lows, saved over a million workers' pensions, delivered historic funding for education, improved child nutrition, and brought the number of uninsured Americans down to the lowest level ever.

In the 119th Congress, I remain committed to working with every Member of this Committee as we achieve our shared goal of ensuring that everyone across this nation has access to quality education, good-paying jobs, and affordable health care.

We may not always agree on the path to achieving these goals, but we can agree to work in good faith and use research and evidence to develop policies that will improve the lives of the people we serve.

In particular, I am eager to pick up where we left off at the end of last Congress and finally pass a reauthorization of the *Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act*. Our bipartisan, bicameral proposal will help train workers for good-paying jobs and connect employers with highly qualified candidates. It is good for workers, good for employers, and good for the economy. So, I hope we can start with that bipartisan initiative.

But I want to be clear: the Committee Democrats will not compromise our values, nor are we interested in rubber-stamping the Trump Administration's agenda. If the Administration is determined to enact "Project 2025," there will be strong opposition from Committee Democrats.

This Committee holds the authority and responsibility to tackle many of the issues confronting our communities today.

First, we are responsible for ensuring that all students have access to a high-quality *public* education that prepares them for a rewarding career.

We are also responsible for building on our historic economic progress and empowering workers so that the economy can continue growing from the middle out and from the bottom up.

And, importantly, we are responsible for protecting and expanding access to affordable health care.

Regardless of which political party is in charge, Committee Democrats' mission is unchanged: We will work to build an economy where everyone can succeed. And finally, Mr. Chairman, I join you in your goal of conducting the Committee proceedings in a dignified manner that we can all be proud of. I look forward to that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I yield back.