

Opening Statement for Ranking Member Mark Takano (CA-41)
Workforce Protections Subcommittee
“Regulatory Reform: Unleashing Economic Opportunity for Workers and Employers”
Wednesday, May 23, 2018 at 10 a.m.

Mr. Chairman—

Thank you for holding this hearing today. I think it imperative that we have a discussion on the impact of President Trump’s reckless, anti-regulatory agenda on working people.

On day one, President Trump promised to stand up for America’s workers, saying, “The forgotten men and women of our country will be forgotten no longer.”

However, right out of the gate the Trump administration rolled out an ideological, anti-regulatory agenda that has negatively affected already struggling workers.

The Trump administration’s efforts to delay, weaken, or rollback Department of Labor regulations—with assistance from congressional Republicans—puts anti-regulatory ideology ahead of efforts to protect workers from lost pay, preventable workplace accidents, and continued discrimination in the workplace.

For example, the Trump administration refusal to defend the Obama-era fix to the outdated overtime rules costs workers \$1.2 billion every year.

I introduced the *Restoring Overtime Pay Act* (H.R. 4505) to codify the Obama-era rule, which would have made 4.2 million more workers newly eligible for overtime pay, strengthened the overtime rights of an additional 8.9 million workers, and raised the share of the salaried workforce that is eligible for overtime from less than 7 percent to a little more than 30 percent.

The Trump administration’s anti-regulation agenda is also putting the health and safety of workers, including children, at risk. At a time when an average 150 workers die from on-the-job injuries and illnesses every day, the administration is planning to relax rules preventing 16- and 17-year-olds from performing dangerous work, including roofing and work using chainsaws and wood chippers.

The Trump administration has also undermined efforts to promote equal pay for equal work by stalling the EEO-1 pay data rule designed to help identify patterns of pay discrimination.

It seems the Trump administration is willing to go to great lengths to push through its anti-worker, deregulatory agenda—even breaking rules already in place. According to reports, the Labor Department hid legally required estimates that showed its proposal would cost workers billions in lost income. Reports indicate this was directed Secretary Acosta who lobbied Office

of Management and Budget Director Mick Mulvaney to let the proposal go through without the required estimates.

The Trump administration's decision to bury these estimates calls into question its commitment to a process that is fair and transparent.

In truth, claims that regulations are "job killers" and deregulation boosts job growth are just scare tactics used by wealthy special interests to divide Americans and convince workers to settle for less than they deserve.

The Obama administration – which President Trump and Congressional Republicans accused of implementing burdensome regulations – oversaw 75 consecutive months of job growth, the longest streak of total job growth on record.

In fact, the pace of job growth has actually *slowed* since President Trump assumed office. In 2017, there were 2.188 million jobs created, lower than job growth during any of Obama's last four years in office.

During the last 12 months of the Trump administration, from May 2017 to April 2018, the economy has added an average 190,000 jobs each month. That's lower than the monthly average of 208,000 jobs during President Obama's last 12 months in office.

Anti-regulatory rhetoric only creates an even greater divide between the wealthy few and working-class Americans. We do not have to choose between an economy that is strong and an economy that treats workers with dignity and respect.

Committee Democrats believe that protecting workers from being killed on the job and ensuring that workers earn a fair wage for their work are basic principles that nearly all Americans share. We want to offer Americans a better deal and have proposed a national paid family leave program, rules to ensure fair work schedules, and smart policies that will grow wages.

I thank the witnesses for joining us here today.

I yield the balance of my time.