

Opening Statement of Ranking Member Scott (VA-03)

Full Committee Markup

Condemning the use of elementary and secondary school facilities to provide shelter for aliens who are not admitted to the United States (H. Res. 461)

Whole Milk for Healthy Kids Act of 2023 (H.R. 1147)

Association Health Plans Act (H.R. 2868)

Self-Insurance Protection Act (H.R. 2813)

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Tuesday, June 6, 2023 | 10:15 a.m.

Thank you, Dr. Foxx, and good morning.

I had hoped that we would be able to start this Congress by passing bipartisan priorities that support the American people. But, regrettably, today, Committee Republicans are calling up another set of bills that neglect our responsibilities to students, workers, and families.

For example, we are considering a proposal that further politicizes classrooms while doing nothing to improve students' safety.

The claim is that H. Res. 461 is about students' safety, but we're ignoring what parents are demanding and what is truly endangering students.

You've blamed books. You've blamed bathrooms. Now, you're blaming immigrants in school gymnasiums.

How far will you bury your heads in the sand and deny that the real threat to school safety is gun violence? In fact, according to the Kaiser Family Foundation, guns are the *leading cause* of death among children and teens.

Any conversation about school safety that does not address gun violence is not a serious conversation.

Next, we are considering a bill that ignores the science and guidance from nutritionists and pediatricians. The current Dietary Guidelines, which are determined by child nutrition experts and public input, make clear that low-fat and fat-free milk are the healthiest options for children.

I am particularly frustrated that the Majority is proposing to break our Committee's long bipartisan practice to not consider standalone child nutrition legislation outside of a child nutrition reauthorization.

The health care bills under consideration today would be the next thing we're going to do to make it harder for workers and families to find affordable and high-quality insurance.

The *Association Health Plans Act* does nothing more than recycle futile attempts to sabotage the Affordable Care Act.

Association health plans might lower premiums for some enrollees, but they do so by skimping on benefits and increasing costs for others. They leave behind the more expensive people to cover and undermine the core promise of the ACA that everyone can pay a reasonable rate for their coverage.

These are different from large businesses. In large businesses, you cannot create your own pool. Your employees are your pool. With association health plans, you can cherry pick low-risk, young, healthy people who could come and form a separate pool. And, obviously, the ones left behind, on average, will be paying more.

To add insult to injury, if someone in an association plan gets sick and starts running up the cost, they can leave the association plan and get back into the regular Obamacare insurance pool to keep the cost low for the association. Well, that's not fair because everybody who is paying slightly higher prices, so that people can get into an association, are essentially providing backup coverage for those in the association health plans.

Under Obamacare, everybody pays the average, notwithstanding pre-existing conditions and everything else. What the association health plans act will do will be to allow young healthy people to get out, pay a slightly lower premium while they're healthy, and everybody else pays a little more.

That does nothing for those who can't cherry pick a group to be in a low-cost plan, but that's not the purpose of the bill. It's just to look out for the privileged few.

Similarly, the *Self-Insurance Protection Act* attempts to unravel the ACA by preventing critical consumer protections from being applied to stop loss insurance.

When subject to appropriate guardrails and regulation, stop loss can mitigate risk for self-insured group health plans. But the stop loss is increasingly designed to mimic health insurance—while not following the rules that apply to everybody else.

This bill would make it virtually impossible for the federal government to protect consumers from abusive stop loss practices. Most disturbingly, it takes the unprecedented step of invalidating state laws that are designed to protect consumers while prohibiting other states from enacting similar laws in the future.

Ultimately, these four bills fall short of our promise to protect students, strengthen child nutrition, and ensure access to affordable, quality health coverage.

If we are serious about fulfilling our promise of helping students, we can work together to end gun violence in schools. We can comprehensively reauthorize federal child nutrition programs. And we can actually lower the cost of quality health insurance for workers and families.

The bills before us do none of these. Therefore, I urge my colleagues to oppose all four.