

Opening Statement of Ranking Member Robert C. "Bobby" Scott (VA-03)

Full Committee Markup

H.R. 8781, *Title IX Clarification Act of 2026*

H.R. 4986, *Parents Opt-in Protection Act*

H.R. 8747, *K-12 AI Literacy and Readiness Act of 2026*

H.R. 8183, *Modernizing Access to Talents, Credentials, and Hiring (MATCH) Act of 2026*

H.R. 9723, *Fit Future Act*

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H.R. 5267, *American Franchise Act*

2175 Rayburn House Office Building

Tuesday, July 21, 2026 | 10:15 a.m.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, here we go again—considering a package of bills that may reflect your priorities—but not the priorities of the American people. Americans are struggling to cover the cost of groceries, housing, child care, health care, and others. And gas has again jumped up to \$4 a gallon. Everyday Americans are working hard, stretching every paycheck, and looking to Congress for solutions that will lower costs, strengthen economic security, and create opportunity.

But this response is to devote valuable Committee time to legislation that, in many cases, advances cheap slogans and soundbites instead of solutions to the problems plaguing our constituents.

H.R. 8781, *Title IX Clarification Act of 2026*

For example, the first bill we will consider today, the *Title IX Clarification Act*, amends Title IX to define “sex” to mean biological sex assigned at birth. It should be noted that less than one-tenth of the U.S. population identifies as trans. And yet, this Congress, we have already considered five bills focused on less than one-tenth of one percent of the population while ignoring the millions who are suffering from an economy that has only worsened under this Administration.

The Supreme Court has already stated in its majority opinion in *B.P.J. v. West Virginia* that “sex” in Title IX had the meaning “biological sex at birth.” Importantly, the Court’s majority left intact prior rulings that Title IX’s prohibition against sex discrimination could include discrimination based on gender identity even while ruling that schools could separate men’s and women’s sports teams based on biological sex. So, this bill really doesn’t clarify anything for these reasons. I’ll oppose the bill, particularly because the only thing it does is narrow the scope of existing civil rights law by writing transgender students out of Title IX’s protections.

H.R. 4986, *Parents Opt-in Protection Act*

The next bill before us, the *Parents Opt-in Protection Act*, similarly prioritizes slogans over solutions. It would amend the *Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment* (PPRA) to require schools to obtain written consent from parents for each individual survey covering sensitive topics. Current law already requires schools to obtain an annual written consent, provide advance notice to parents, and allow parents to review the surveys.

This bill replaces that balanced approach with a burdensome opt-in requirement for each individual survey. This bill would make it harder for schools to collect critical information on student mental health, school climate, and safety while offering no new rights for parents. For these reasons, I will be voting no, and I urge my colleagues to do the same.

H.R. 8747, *K-12 AI Literacy and Readiness Act of 2026*

The next bill before us, the *K-12 AI Literacy and Readiness Act of 2026*, amends Title IV-A of the *Every Student Succeeds Act* to add artificial intelligence (AI) as an allowable use of Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants. It's curious because current law already allows Title IV-A funds to be used for AI. Title IV-A has a wide variety of allowable uses that allow states and districts the flexibility they need to meet the needs of their communities. In fact, districts are already using Title IV-A funds to incorporate AI literacy into their schools.

What states and districts *actually* need is clear federal guidance on how to safely and effectively integrate AI while protecting students and supporting educators. The lack of guidance is particularly troubling given that the Trump Administration has just eliminated the Office of Educational Technology, the very office that was best positioned to provide that leadership and guidance. While I am in favor of ensuring Title IV-A clearly and accurately describes allowable uses that meet the needs of states and school districts, I am concerned that this bill's broad language could unintentionally create an environment where AI tools cause more harm than good because the bill does not include any protection of student privacy.

H.R. 8183, *Modernizing Access to Talents, Credentials, and Hiring (MATCH) Act of 2026*

The fourth bill we will consider is the *Modernizing Access to Talents, Credentials, and Hiring*, or *MATCH Act*. It would help states develop talent marketplaces using Learning and Employment Records to better connect workers with education and employment opportunities.

There's been bipartisan negotiations going on led by Representatives McBath and Owens, so the bill was revised into a five-year pilot program with strong evaluation requirements and important worker protections. By helping workers better demonstrate their skills and credentials, this legislation has the potential to expand access to quality jobs and strengthen our workforce system. For those reasons, I support the bill, and urge my colleagues to do the same.

H.R. 9723, *Fit Future Act*

The fifth bill before us, the *Fit Future Act*, codifies the President's Council on Sports, Fitness, and Nutrition. The Council currently exists through executive order.

While the bill largely codifies an existing advisory body, I believe Democratic amendments on affordability, accessibility, and inclusivity will strengthen this bill by ensuring that efforts to promote youth fitness are more equitable despite students' differing abilities or disabilities. While the bill is unnecessary since the Council already exists for decades, with the improvements offered by my colleagues, I plan to support the bill.

H.R. 8660, *Valuing Employee Stock Today Act*

The sixth bill before us is the *Valuing Employee Stock Act*. This bill would allow employers to pay employees less for overtime worked by excluding restricted stock units (RSUs) when calculating overtime pay. RSUs are a company's promise to issue stock to employees through a vesting plan—typically after the employee has remained with the company for a certain amount of time.

RSUs are not the same as the stock programs, which are currently excluded when calculating workers' overtime pay under the *Fair Labor Standards Act*, and there has been no policy basis established at any Committee hearing this Congress for adding RSUs to the list of exclusions by which an employer can reduce the amount of overtime they pay. I oppose this bill and urge my colleagues to oppose it as well.

H.R. 8347, *Reinforcing Underserved, Rural, and Local (RURAL) Healthcare Act*

The next and seventh bill we will consider is the *Reinforcing Underserved, Rural, and Local (RURAL) Healthcare Act*. This bill would allow employers to misclassify health care workers as independent contractors and effectively strip them of their worker protections and benefits that their coworkers enjoy, such as access to overtime pay, unemployment insurance, workers' compensation, and the right to collectively bargain.

Rural America faces serious and unique health care challenges. Too many communities struggle with provider shortages, hospital closures, and limited access to care. These problems deserve serious discussion and real solutions. Unfortunately, H.R. 8347 does not offer any. Stripping an employee of their rights and reducing their compensation is not a solution. Instead, it is a distraction from the very real harms to rural health care created by the Republicans' 'Big Ugly Bill.' This will result in rural hospitals and clinics closing. For the sake of workers and patients, I urge my colleagues to join me in opposing H.R. 8347.

H.R. 6213, *Heat Workforce Standards Act of 2025*

Next, we will consider the *Heat Workforce Standards Act*, which would block the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) from finalizing and enforcing a nationwide heat safety standard.

According to Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) data, heat stress killed 907 U.S. workers between 1992 and 2019, but the true death toll is likely much higher and will likely continue to climb. This should go without saying, but workers should not be risking their lives in order to get their jobs. The Biden Administration addressed this problem with a proposed rule that would require employers to recognize the risk and to provide workers with access to things like drinking water, periodic rest breaks in shaded or cooled areas, heat illness training, and emergency response plans.

Mr. Chairman, after experiencing the heat domes that have settled over large segments of this country, workers are at risk now more than ever. This bill would prevent the Department of Labor from finalizing a rule to do anything to address heat stress. Therefore, I oppose this bill and strongly urge my colleagues to do the same.

H.R. 8775, *Ending Predator Access to Union Power Act*

The ninth bill we will consider is the *Ending Predator Access to Union Power Act*. This bill would prevent those convicted of a sex offense against a minor from serving as a union official, staff, in labor-relation positions with employers, and other related roles. I would be remiss if I did not point out that the title inaccurately implies that this restriction only applies to unions. It applies to anyone working in union management on the union or employer side.

Any individual in a position of trust must be held to a high standard. So, I will support the bill and urge my colleagues to do the same.

H.R. 5267, *American Franchise Act*

Finally, we will consider the *American Franchise Act*. This bill narrows joint [employer] rules for franchisees and franchisors under both the *Fair Labor Standards Act* and *National Labor Relations Act*. More specifically, it would limit the finding of joint employment liability for a franchisor's "direct and immediate control" over their franchisees' workers' conditions and even goes so far as to carve out exceptions even when "direct and immediate control" might be found in certain cases. This is despite the fact that many large franchisors require their franchisees to uphold strict standards that affect the day-to-day lives of franchisee employees. And actually, causes a lot of the violations this bill will require the franchisee to pay for.

This bill would protect large franchisors from any liability for violations their franchisees may make based on the franchisor's standards, policies, and direction, and strip workers of their right to collectively bargain with the franchisor. It lets the real decision-makers off the hook and makes it harder for workers to fight back when they are underpaid, mistreated, or ignored at the bargaining table. For those reasons, I'll be voting no and urge my colleagues to do the same.

As we've discussed today, there are areas where this Committee can work together. But too many of the other bills before us today fail to address the challenges families are *actually* facing. Worse, the bills today that move us away from policies that expand opportunity, protect workers, and support students. As we head into the August recess, our constituents expect us to be focused on lowering costs, supporting public education, and improving the lives of workers, and these bills do just the opposite. I hope that when we return in the fall, this Committee will redirect itself and devote its time to the appropriate priorities.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I yield back.