

Opening Statement of Ranking Member Robert C. "Bobby" Scott

Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education

"Academic Freedom Under Attack: Loosening the CCP's Grip on America's Classrooms"

Tuesday, September 19, 2023 | 10:15 a.m.

Thank you, Chairman Bean. And thank you in advance to our witnesses for your testimony today.

Once again, Committee Republicans are holding a hearing on a topic that will only further their extreme agenda and inject divisive, partisan politics into our children's classrooms.

We are actually nearly 11 days away from a potential government shutdown, and here we are unconcerned about the impact of a shutdown on our economy. And we are facing a child care cliff at the end of this month.

House Republicans proposed solution is an array of devastating cuts to the federal funding that fuels our children's education. According to my colleagues on the Appropriations Committee, the proposed cuts to Labor-HHS Appropriations would eliminate access to early childhood education for over 50,000 children through cuts to Head Start, potentially remove over 200,000 teachers from classrooms serving low-income students through cuts in Title I and wipe out federal support for vital academic services that support over 5 million English learners.

Rather than finding ways to help families keep a roof over their heads, put food on the table, and find affordable, quality child care, the Majority would rather waste the Committee's time today promoting conspiracy theories and dubious research.

By contrast, just last week, Congressional Democrats introduced the *Child Care Stabilization Act* to address a potential child care crisis and preserve the vital child care stabilization funding expiring at the end of this month. The bill would keep thousands of child care providers afloat, save child care slots for millions of children, and help ensure access to quality and affordable child care for working families. It is my hope that colleagues across the aisle will help us save the child care sector from potential collapse.

Furthermore, I am concerned the Majority thought it was appropriate to hold a Congressional hearing on an unsubstantiated report, which was paid for by a group that the Southern Poverty Law Center has designated as an extremist organization. Dr. Foxx and I have always prided ourselves in the fact that we can disagree without being disagreeable. But this report and the allegations in it have already been debunked by a 2019 Senate investigation, hearing, and [report](#), and this hearing gives it credibility it does not deserve.

And I ask unanimous consent to insert that report into the record.

We can provide students with an inclusive, accurate, and well-funded education without conspiracy theories that fuel anti-Asian discrimination. Rather, we should encourage students to discover other languages and cultures and encourage schools to create safe and inviting educational environments.

It would be a better use of our time today if Members focused on funding the government, improving school infrastructure, closing academic achievement gaps, and confronting other serious challenges facing children, educators, and families.

So, I hope we can have a productive and respectful discussion today and I thank the witnesses for their time.

I yield back.