



# OPENING STATEMENT

House Committee on Education and Labor

Chairman Robert C. "Bobby" Scott

## Opening Statement of Chairman Scott (VA-03)

Full Committee Markup

Thursday, September 15, 2022 | 10:15 a.m.

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Today, we are meeting to markup three resolutions of inquiry, or ROIs—a tool used to conduct oversight.

Committee Democrats take very seriously our responsibility to conduct oversight and view our work as a critical constitutional function of Congress. To that end, the Committee has held 16 oversight hearings during the 117<sup>th</sup> Congress— which included nearly 50 hours of hearings with several Biden-Harris Administration officials, such as the Secretary of Education; the Undersecretary of the Department of Education; and the Chief Operating Officer of the Office of Federal Student Aid, and many others.

The role of Congressional oversight sits squarely with the Committee's Chair and the Majority party. According to the Congressional Research Service, "...No judicial precedent has directly recognized a right in an individual Member, other than a committee chair, to exercise a committee's oversight authority without the permission of a majority of the committee or its chair."

Even still, as I understand, the Biden-Harris Administration has been responsive to letters from the Minority. The Administration has not only responded to the letters sent by the Minority but has also met with Minority staff on multiple occasions to address their inquiries.

Let's contrast this with the previous Administration.

Within the first six months of former President Trump's term, it was publicly reported that White House lawyers directed the Executive Departments to completely ignore oversight requests from Congressional Democrats. When Democrats took the majority in the House in 2019, and Majority Committee Staff were vested with the Congressional oversight authority I referred to earlier, we still faced unprecedented stonewalling from the Administration in responding to Committee inquiries.

So, let's be clear: despite having no requirement or recent precedent to do so, the Biden-Harris Administration has been responsive to oversight requests from the Minority. Simply because you do not like the answer you received does not mean the Department is unresponsive.

Moreover, even if the Minority did have a legitimate role in conducting oversight, the breadth and scope of the ROIs before us are excessive.

I urge my colleagues to move these ROIs expeditiously this morning so we can return to the Committee's work to help students, workers, and families succeed.