

**Opening Statement for Chairman Robert C. “Bobby” Scott**  
House Committee on Education and Labor  
Full Committee Organizational Meeting for the 116<sup>th</sup> Congress  
January 29, 2019 at 10:15 a.m.  
2175 Rayburn House Office Building

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I thank my colleagues for being here today. We have a full agenda this Congress. As we formally begin our work in the 116th Congress, I want to express my commitment to working with every Member of this Committee to achieve the goals we share. Ensuring all Americans have access to a quality education, a good-paying job, and affordable health care are not partisan objectives – they are the building blocks for a thriving middle class.

And while we will not always agree on the path to achieving these goals, I hope we can agree to work in good-faith and to be guided by evidence and research in developing policies that will improve the lives of the people we serve.

This Committee has the authority and responsibility to address many of the critical issues facing working families and middle-class Americans. We have a duty to improve the quality and lower the cost of our education system – from early childhood education to college and career. We have a duty to restore an economy that once again lifts up hardworking families out of poverty and supports the middle class. And we have a duty to ensure that our health care system is affordable and accessible to all Americans, particularly those with preexisting conditions.

For our constituents, these problems are not political or theoretical – they are embedded in everyday life. We must act accordingly.

We also have a duty to ensure that the laws we make are properly enacted and enforced. Oversight is a constitutional prerogative, an important responsibility of Congress, and a core objective of the Committee. The Committee will lead aggressive oversight to ensure that the departments, agencies, programs, and statutes in our areas of jurisdiction are operated and executed in an effective, efficient, and transparent manner as well as follow congressional intent in their scope, activities, and operations.

In an era of divided government, we must recognize that real legislative and oversight accomplishments will require us to work together. As Chairman, I look forward to working with each of you to find meaningful solutions for Americans across the country.

Now I’d like to welcome and introduce the new majority Members of the committee. The Committee’s Democratic Members reflect a broad cross-section of America. They include health care providers, labor advocates, educators, small business owners, and a former cabinet secretary. The expertise and experience they bring to this Committee will be invaluable in our efforts to ensure America is a country where everyone can succeed. I look forward to all that we will accomplish together on behalf of the American people.

Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal has represented Washington's 7th congressional district since the 115th Congress. Representative Jayapal previously served in the Washington State Senate, where she was the first South Asian American ever elected to the State Legislature and the only woman of color in the Washington State Senate. She has been a financial analyst on Wall Street, a non-profit executive director, and a social justice advocate.

Congressman Joe Morelle has represented New York's 25th congressional district since November 2018. He served as a member of the New York State Assembly, where he was the Majority Leader from 2013 to 2018. He previously ran a small business.

Congresswoman Susan Wild represents Pennsylvania's 7th congressional district and previously represented Pennsylvania's 15th congressional district at the end of the 115th Congress after winning a special election. Representative Wild is a former private lawyer and city solicitor.

Congressman Josh Harder represents California's 10th congressional district. He is a former venture capitalist and taught business classes at the local junior college. He also spent time working with farmers in Kenya and Uganda.

Congresswoman Lucy McBath represents Georgia's 6th congressional district. Following the tragic murder of her son, Representative McBath became a gun safety and reform advocate and spokeswoman. She also established a foundation that provides financial and educational assistance to graduating high school students going to college.

Congresswoman Kim Schrier represents Washington's 8th congressional district. She studied astrophysics before becoming a pediatrician and is the only woman doctor in Congress.

Congresswoman Lauren Underwood represents Illinois' 14th congressional district. Representative Underwood is a registered nurse and previously served in President Obama's Administration as a senior advisor in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Congresswoman Jahana Hayes represents Connecticut's 5th congressional district. Representative Hayes previously taught high school government and history, and she was recognized as the National Teacher of the Year in 2016.

Congresswoman Donna Shalala represents Florida's 27th congressional district. Representative Shalala served as the assistant secretary for policy development and research at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development during the Carter Administration, president of Hunter College of the City University of New York, chancellor of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services during the Clinton Administration, and later as president of the University of Miami.

Congressman Andy Levin represents Michigan's 9th congressional district. Representative Levin previously worked as an attorney, human rights activist, and clean energy entrepreneur. He has served as an organizer for SEIU, staff attorney to President Clinton's labor law reform commission, consultant in Secretary Robert Reich's office at the Department of Labor, Assistant Director of Organizing at the AFL-CIO, and Chief Workforce Officer for the State of Michigan.

Congresswoman Ilhan Omar represents Minnesota's 5th congressional district. The first Somali-American member of Congress, Representative Omar has worked as a community nutrition educator, child nutrition outreach coordinator at the Minnesota Department of Education, and senior policy aide for a Minneapolis city-council member.

Congressman David Trone represents Maryland's 6th congressional district. Representative Trone started off as a small business entrepreneur during graduate school and grew his business to a large, privately-owned company where he served as President while also serving on the board of trustees of Furman University and American University, and the board of directors of the Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce.

Congresswoman Haley Stevens represents Michigan's 11th congressional district. Previously, Representative Stevens served as chief of staff for the U.S. Treasury Department auto task force working group assigned to rescuing the auto industry after the 2007 financial crisis. Most recently, she led a job training program and created the country's first online certification program for digital manufacturing.

Congresswoman Susie Lee represents Nevada's 3rd congressional district. Representative Lee was the founding director of After-School All-Stars, a nonprofit organization that provides after-school activities for at-risk students, and President of Communities In Schools of Nevada, a nationally recognized dropout prevention organization.

Congresswoman Lori Trahan represents Massachusetts' 3rd congressional district. Previously, Representative Trahan was the CEO of a woman-owned consulting firm, worked in the marketing software industry, and before that was the Chief of Staff to former Representative Martin Meehan of Massachusetts' 5th congressional district.

Congressman Joaquin Castro has represented Texas' 20th congressional district since the 113th Congress. Previously, Representative Castro served as a member of the Texas House of Representatives for ten years, where he was vice-chair of the Higher Education Committee. He also had a private legal practice and was a professor.

I will now yield to the distinguished Ranking Member of the Committee, the Gentlelady from North Carolina, Dr. Foxx, to make an opening statement and to introduce the new Members on the Republican side of the aisle. First let me say that it is a pleasure working with Representative Foxx. Working together to find common ground last Congress, we were able to pass much needed legislation to help the American people, such as the reauthorization of JJDDPA as well as Perkins CTE. We made great strides in addressing the opioid crisis. And we share a commitment to strengthening workers skills. I appreciate your dedication to the issues and your leadership, and I hope that our collaboration continues in the 116th Congress as we work on priority issues like reauthorizing CAPTA and Higher Education, doing more to address substance use disorder, and ensuring that workers and families across the nation have the skills and supports they need to thrive. I now yield to the distinguished Ranking Member, Representative Foxx.