

**Opening Statement of Ranking Member Scott (VA-03)**

Full Committee Markup

H.R. 6914, *Pregnant Students' Rights Act*

H.R. 443, *Enhancing Detection of Human Trafficking Act*

2175 Rayburn House Office Building

Wednesday, January 10, 2024 | 10:15 a.m.

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Thank you, Madam Chair. Today, the Committee is marking up two bills.

The first bill we will consider is H.R. 6914, the so-called *Pregnant Students' Rights Act*.

More than a year and a half ago, the Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade*, which triggered state-sanctioned abortion bans and imposed a complicated web of legal challenges for reproductive health providers and patients seeking care. Now, the House Republicans want to limit students' access to information about resources, including *all* accommodations and protections available to pregnant students and student parents on college campuses.

Although this bill purports to educate pregnant students about their academic rights and protections, its impact is much more sinister. By requiring institutions of higher education to only share information that encourages students to carry a pregnancy to term, they are potentially unduly influencing a woman's choice by keeping her in the dark about *all* options available to her. Moreover, they fail to support—or even acknowledge—students who have different pregnancy-related outcomes, including those who may experience a miscarriage.

Women should be able to control their own bodies, lives, and futures. By shielding students about health care choices, resources, and rights that are available to them, they are denying them the choice to decide what is best for themselves and their families.

Somewhat ironically, as we are marking up this bill, the Republicans on the Appropriations Committee are pushing sweeping cuts to services and programs that student parents would benefit from, such as on-campus child care centers and fully funding WIC nutrition programs.

Today, the Committee Democrats will focus on offering amendments to ensure students have access to comprehensive and accurate reproductive health care education, including information about contraception, abortion, pregnancy loss, and the full suite of services available to them during their pregnancy and after birth.

In a post-*Roe* world, it is more important—now than ever—that people have access to comprehensive and accurate reproductive health care information. So, I'll be opposing this legislation, and I urge my colleagues to do the same.

The second bill is a noncontroversial bipartisan measure—led by the gentleman from Michigan, Mr. Walberg, and the gentleman from the Northern Mariana Islands, Mr. Sablan—that ensures the Department of Labor

continues to train and educate employees on detecting and appropriately reporting cases of suspected human trafficking.

Exploiting our most vulnerable workers has no place in our society. Regrettably, far too many people continue to be forced to work in abusive, unsafe, and unlawful working conditions at the hands of criminals and unscrupulous employers.

To be clear, I support the bipartisan legislation—but Committee Republicans should not be taking a victory lap as if they are doing everything possible to address trafficking, which they are not.

House Republicans continue to advance budgets that defund the Bureau of International Labor Affairs, ILAB, which includes the Office of Child Labor, Forced Labor, and Human Trafficking. And in case this was not evident to my colleagues, that very office plays a pivotal role in cracking down on human trafficking and the use of child labor in global supply chains, and the one that is being defunded.

This bill also does not even authorize additional funding for the Department of Labor to conduct the training or complete the required report, which is part of the legislation.

And, according to the Department of Labor, child labor violations have quintupled since 2015, but Committee Republicans have refused our repeated requests to schedule a hearing focused on child labor. Meanwhile, Republican state legislators all over the country continue to roll back child labor protections.

If my Republican colleagues are serious about ending child labor, I urge them to consider the [\*Protecting Children Act\*](#), which Ranking Member Adams and I introduced last July. The *Protecting Children Act* would empower the Department of Labor to address child labor by providing federal worker protection agencies with the tools and resources to deter violations that prevent harm to children from intensive work in dangerous jobs.

So, thank you, Madam Chair. I yield back.