

**Opening Statement for Ranking Member Alma Adams (NC-12)**

Subcommittee on Workforce Protections

*"Bad for Business: DOL's Proposed Overtime Rule"*

2175 Rayburn House Office Building

Wednesday, November 29, 2023 | 10:15 a.m.

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Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you to our witnesses for your testimony today.

The investments made by Congressional Democrats and the Biden Administration spurred historic economic and wage growth, effectively rebuilding our economy from the bottom up and middle out.

That's not a talking point. That's a fact.

The Economic Policy Institute reports that from 2019 to 2022, low-wage workers experienced the fastest real wage growth during a business cycle peak of any time since 1979. And our economy has added more than 14 million jobs since President Biden took office.

This historic economic growth was not coincidental—it is a direct result of Congressional Democrats and President Biden's policy choices to support workers and businesses.

For example, the *American Rescue Plan Act* (ARPA) passed without a single Congressional Republican vote, secured investments that helped vulnerable workers make ends meet and keep them in the workforce. And the *Inflation Reduction Act* (IRA) accelerated our economic growth, lowering costs for workers and families and helping them keep a roof over their heads and food on their tables.

Furthermore, President Biden has fully embraced a progressive, pro-worker regulatory agenda by raising federal contract workers' pay to \$15 an hour and repealing harmful restrictions imposed by the previous administration that allowed unscrupulous employers to misclassify workers and deny them overtime pay, minimum wage, and workers' compensation, just to name a few.

Additionally, the Biden Administration proposed a rule to raise the overtime threshold for an additional 3.6 million Americans. Moreover, it includes safeguards to automatically and routinely update the threshold so that employees and businesses do not have to wait for future federal updates.

These protections are essential for workers who must work long hours to provide for themselves and their families.

You know working hard is not enough if you don't make enough.

However, I am concerned that my Republican colleagues are attempting to undermine workers' financial security by limiting their access to overtime pay.

Employees should not have to bargain for what they are due by their employers. Your company should pay you for *every hour you work*, including "time and a half."

It's that simple.

Regrettably, Committee Republicans' proposals would instead protect unscrupulous employers at the expense of hardworking Americans' wages and well-being. For example, in the last Congress, Committee Republicans reintroduced the *Working Families Flexibility Act*, which allows private sector employers to "compensate" hourly workers with comp time instead of overtime pay.

In stark contrast, Congressional Democrats have reintroduced the *Wage Theft Prevention and Wage Recovery Act*, which authorizes a civil penalty and increases the maximum penalty for employers who fail to adequately compensate workers for overtime work. Congressional Democrats also reintroduced the *Family and Medical Insurance Leave (FAMILY) Act* to ensure every worker can access paid leave.

I would welcome my colleagues' support on these proposals to help improve the lives of workers and their families.

And so, I want to thank our witnesses again for their time. I look forward to a productive discussion. Mr. Chair, I yield back.