

EXAMINING THE POLICIES AND PRIORITIES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

HEARING BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ONE HUNDRED NINETEENTH CONGRESS FIRST SESSION

HEARING HELD IN WASHINGTON, DC, JUNE 5, 2025

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EXAMINING THE POLICIES AND PRIORITIES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

Thursday, June 5, 2025

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE,
Washington, DC.

The Committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:16 a.m., in Room 2175, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Tim Walberg, (Chairman of the Committee) presiding.

Present: Representatives Walberg, Wilson, Foxx, Thompson, Grothman, Stefanik, Allen, Owens, Miller, Kiley, Moylan, Onder, Mackenzie, Harris, Messmer, Fine, Scott, Courtney, Wilson, Bonamici, Takano, Adams, DeSaulnier, McBath, Hayes, Omar, Stevens, Casar, Lee, Mannion, and Ansari.

Staff present: Vlad Cerga, Director of Information Technology; Amy Raaf Jones, Director of Education and Human Services Policy; Libby Kearns, Press Assistant; Katerina Kerska, Legislative Assistant; Trey Kovacs, Director of Workforce Policy; Campbell Ladd, Clerk; R.J. Laukitis, Staff Director; Danny Marca, Director of Information Technology; Brad Mannion, Professional Staff Member; John Martin, Deputy Director of Workforce Policy/Counsel; Audra McGeorge, Communications Director; Alexis Morgan, Intern; Daniel Nadel, Legislative Assistant; Kevin O'Keefe, Professional Staff Member; Ethan Pann, Deputy Press Secretary and Digital Director; Ellison Powell, Intern; Kane Riddell, Staff Assistant; Carl Rifino, Intern; Sara Robertson, Press Secretary; Heidi Schneider, Professional Staff Member; Isabel Soto, Professional Staff Member; Ann Vogel, Director of Operations; Ali Watson, Director of Member Services; Joe Wheeler, Professional Staff Member; James Whitaker, General Counsel; Jeanne Wilson, Retirement Counsel; Ambrose Tierney, Intern; Ellie Berenson, Minority Press Assistant; Sayda Bir, Minority Intern; Ilana Brunner, Minority General Counsel; Ni'Aisha Banks, Minority Policy Aide & Internship Coordinator; David Dailey, Minority Chief of Staff; Nichole Dumiao, Minority AIPACS Intern; Dylan Dunson, Minority Intern; Caroline Guo, Minority Intern; Patrick Jo, Minority Intern; Scott Estrada, Minority Professional Staff; Alexandra Walker, Minority Intern; Vivian Wiggins, Minority Intern; Stephanie Lalle, Minority Communications Director; Jessica Schieder, Minority Economic Policy Advisor; Dhrtvan Sherman, Minority Research Assistant; Bob Shull, Minority Senior Labor Policy Counsel; Raiyana Malone, Minority Press Secretary; Brian Marshall, Minority Legal Intern; Kevin McDermott, Minority Director of Labor Policy; Mason Pesek, Minority Labor Policy Counsel; Véronique Pluviose, Minority Staff

Director, Theresa Tilling-Thompson; Banyon Vassar, Minority Director of IT.

Chairman WALBERG. Order. A quorum is present. The Committee meets today pursuant to notice. Without objection, the Chair may recess the Committee at any point. Today's hearing is about Examining the Policies and Priorities of the Department of Labor.

We will look at the Trump administration's plans for a smaller and more effective and efficient government for taxpayers. Its plans to ensure that fewer, more effective regulations protect workers without compromising business potential. In its efforts to ensure that skilled workers can fill jobs that will ensure our economy is strong.

President Trump returned to the White House at an important time for our economy. Years of misguided Democrat's stimulus spending hampered job creation, fueled the massive inflation crisis, and made more Americans dependent on the Federal Government.

The Biden-Harris administration also pursued an agenda that relied on heavy handed mandates and out of touch regulatory policies, leading to high inflation and workforce shortages. Simply put, President Biden's radical policies crushed the American workforce.

The Biden-Harris administration reversed common sense policies enacted by the first Trump administration in favor of radical one size fits all regulations that prioritize labor union leaders, expanded the Federal bureaucracy, and pushed the radical DEI agenda.

Of particular concern, the Biden-Harris Overtime Rule would have cost job creators an estimated 1.3 billion dollars in increased compliance burdens on small businesses. The Biden-Harris administration's war on independent contractors stifled innovation and creativity, ultimately harming workers, businesses, and the U.S. economy.

Studies have estimated a total national cost of 17 billion dollars and if 15 percent of independent contractors are reclassified as employees and let me read that again. Studies have estimated a total national cost of 17 billion dollars if 15 percent of independent contractors are reclassified as employees, and 57 billion dollars if 50 percent are reclassified.

In stark contrast, the Trump administration is working to advance economic policies that unleash the ingenuity and entrepreneurial spirit of the American workforce. President Trump is halting the job killing and inflation driving regulatory blitz, and businesses and workers are optimistic.

The President has ordered a review of all pending regulations and signed an executive order directing Federal agencies to eliminate 10 existing regulations for each new regulation issued. The Trump's administration's efforts to root out waste, fraud, and abuse are reflected in the President's budget request.

By reigning in wasteful, fraudulent spending and restoring fiscal sanity in Washington, the proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2026 will help put more money in taxpayers' pockets. In fact, Americans are already being impacted by the policies that eliminate excessive regulations, lower costs, promote job creation and create optimism that tax rates will not increase.

Following President Trump's return, our economy has added jobs every month. As President Trump continues to build this golden age for America, this Committee recognizes that too many businesses are struggling to fill the millions of open positions in the United States.

Republicans are already working with President Trump to address the skills gap, which more than 7 million unfilled jobs are seeing in the U.S. and over 7 million unemployed individuals. It is obvious that we should be doing more to support those looking to gain new skills.

Therefore, the Committee has advanced bipartisan reforms to allow Pell Grants to support students in high-quality, short-term workforce education programs. I look forward to hearing from today's witness, Lori Chavez-DeRemer, as she begins her tenure as our country's 30th Secretary of Labor.

Her perspective on the Department's budget and policy proposals will be unlike those of previous labor secretaries. She is the daughter of a Teamster. She is a small business owner, a former Mayor, and more importantly than ever, a former colleague on this very Committee. Additionally, Lori is planning to travel to all 50 states this year. I think you have made 15 already, 13 already.

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. 13.

Chairman WALBERG. Yes. To hear directly from workers and businesses and the business owners across our diverse country. What a refreshing change actually talking to workers, and job creators, instead of forcing top-down regulation on them.

I look forward to hearing from the Secretary about the American workers and businesses she has already spoken to, and how they are taking advantage of opportunities available thanks to the Trump administration and congressional republican policies that are getting the economy and workforce back on track.

Having said that, with that I yield to the Ranking Member for an opening statement.

[The prepared statement of Chairman Walberg follows:]

STATEMENT OF HON. TIM WALBERG, CHAIRMAN, COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND
WORKFORCE

Today's hearing is about examining the policies and priorities of the Department of Labor. We will look at the Trump administration's plans for a smaller and more effective government for taxpayers; its plans to ensure that fewer—but more effective—regulations protect workers without compromising business potential; and its efforts to ensure that skilled workers can fill jobs that will ensure our economy is strong.

President Trump returned to the White House at an important time for our economy. Years of misguided Democrat "stimulus" spending hampered job creation, fueled a massive inflation crisis, and made more Americans dependent on the federal government. The Biden-Harris administration also pursued an agenda that relied on heavy-handed mandates and out-of-touch regulatory policies leading to high inflation and workforce shortages.

Simply put, President Biden's radical policies crushed the American workforce. The Biden-Harris administration reversed common-sense policies—enacted by the first Trump administration—in favor of radical one-size-fits-all regulations that prioritized labor union leaders, expanded the federal bureaucracy, and pushed a radical DEI agenda. Of particular concern, the Biden-Harris overtime rule would have cost job creators an estimated \$1.3 billion and increased compliance burdens on small businesses.

The Biden-Harris administration's war on independent contractors stifled innovation and creativity, ultimately harming workers, businesses, and the U.S. economy. Studies have estimated a total national cost of \$17 billion if 15 percent of inde-

pendent contractors are reclassified as employees and \$57 billion if 50 percent are reclassified.

In stark contrast, the Trump administration is working to advance economic policies that unleash the ingenuity and entrepreneurial spirit of the American workforce. President Trump is halting the job-killing and inflation-driving regulatory blitz, and businesses and workers are optimistic. The President has ordered a review of all pending regulations and signed an executive order directing federal agencies to eliminate 10 existing regulations for each new regulation issued.

The Trump administration's efforts to root out waste, fraud, and abuse are reflected in the President's budget request. By reining in wasteful, fraudulent spending and restoring fiscal sanity in Washington, the proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2026 will help put more money in taxpayers' pockets.

In fact, Americans are already being impacted by the policies that eliminate excessive regulations, lower costs, promote job creation, and create optimism that tax rates will not increase. Following President Trump's return, our economy has added jobs every month.

As President Trump continues to build this Golden Age for America, this Committee recognizes that too many businesses are struggling to fill the millions of open positions in the United States. Republicans are already working with President Trump to address the skills gap. With more than 7 million unfilled jobs in the U.S. and over 7 million unemployed individuals, it is obvious that we should be doing more to support those looking to gain new skills. Therefore, the Committee has advanced bipartisan reforms to allow Pell Grants to support students in high-quality, short-term workforce education programs.

I look forward to hearing from today's witness, Lori Chavez-DeRemer, as she begins her tenure as our country's 30th Secretary of Labor. Her perspective on the Department's budget and policy proposals will be unlike those of previous labor secretaries. She is the daughter of a Teamster, a small business owner, a former mayor, and a former colleague of this very Committee. Additionally, Lori is planning to travel to all 50 states this year to hear directly from workers and business owners across our diverse country. What a refreshing change—actually talking to workers and job creators instead of forcing top-down regulation on them. I look forward to hearing from the Secretary about the American workers and businesses she has already spoken to, and how they are taking advantage of opportunities available thanks to the Trump administration and congressional Republican policies that are getting the economy and workforce back on track.

With that, I yield to the Ranking Member for an opening statement

Mr. SCOTT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Madam Secretary, it is always good to see a former colleague, and welcome back to the Committee you served on.

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Thank you.

Mr. SCOTT. It was good to talk to you earlier this week, and I understand that you tried to get in touch with every member of the Committee, Democrat and Republican, and that is obviously a good way to start and we look forward to working with you with that spirit.

As Secretary, you are charged with carrying out the mission of the Department of Labor, which is to, and I quote, "Foster, promote, and develop the welfare of wage earners, job seekers, and retirees of the United States, improve working conditions, advance opportunities for profitable employment and ensure work related benefits and rights."

Today you are appearing before this Committee to explain the budget and the policy priorities as detailed in the Department's Fiscal Year 2026 budget proposal. The Speaker Emeritus Nancy Pelosi frequently states, "Show me your budget, and I'll tell you your values." That is why these meetings on the budgets are so important.

Madam Secretary, your written testimony states that you promise to put America's workers first, and that you indicated many

areas where there may be bipartisan support. For example, the expansion of the Department of Labor certified registered apprenticeships is one area where I think we have a good bipartisan support.

The reauthorization of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act, WIOA, is another. We already have a bipartisan, bicameral agreement on reauthorization, which came close to passing last December. I hope we can get that bill back on track and, although not technically within your jurisdiction, workforce Pell is another area where there is bipartisan support.

The workforce Pell Grants can serve to open opportunities for millions of workers who seek to gain skills that could transform their earning capacity. Unfortunately, instead of pursuing the initiatives that have bipartisan support, the administration has taken many actions that I think take us in the opposite direction, jeopardizing jobs, endangering the rights and protections of the workers, and undermining the financial security of retirees.

Specifically, this administration has rescinded the landmark executive order in effect for 50 years, protecting Federal contract workers and job applicants from discrimination. They rescinded an executive order that raised the minimum wage for Federal contractors. Illegally fired Inspectors General at the Department of Labor and several other agencies who are charged with rooting out waste, fraud, and abuse.

Delayed enforcement of a rule protecting coal miners from silica exposure and terminated grants that combat child labor and promote workers' rights. In another action the administration fired a member of the National Labor Relations Board, leaving the NLRB without a quorum to function and issue decisions.

They fired two EEOC Commissioners, who were in the middle of their terms, and this has never happened in the agency's 60-year history, leaving the EEOC without a quorum to address legal claims of workplace discrimination. Stripped collective bargaining rights from more than a million Federal workers.

In addition to these concerns, Madam Secretary, we are concerned about what Elon Musk and DOGE have been doing in the Department. Many weeks ago, we asked you if Musk had access to confidential files on investigations of his businesses, including the names of potential witnesses, and whether or not he had access to Bureau and Labor Statistics information like job numbers, before they are made public.

Now, whether or not he is continuing that access to get that information, and we have not received an answer yet. We are also concerned about what is going on at the Mine Safety and Health Administration. One of the Labor Department's first moves in this administration was to revoke the provisional job offers to dozens of new MSHA inspectors.

Madam Secretary, I was on this Committee when we investigated the tragedy in Sago and the tragedy at Upper Big Branch. One of the most important lessons we learned from those tragedies was that we must invest in MSHA's pipeline of talent, so qualified inspectors will be there to ensure the safety in these dangerous jobs.

We know that that process takes years. Madam Secretary, in your testimony in other Committees, you have had questions about

the abrupt closure of Job Corps. Across the Nation since its inception in 1965, Job Corps has trained over 3 million young Americans in various trades, including welding, carpentry, medical assistance, and a lot of others.

Job Corps, which you know has bipartisan support in Congress, trains young, low-income people, and helps them find good paying jobs, and provides housing for a population that might otherwise be without a home. I agree with your letter that you sent to the House Appropriations Committee on May 1, 2024, in which you argued that, and I quote, “In fact, studies show that Job Corps increases applicants’ employment and wages, decreases their reliance on public benefits.”

The most recent completed program year nearly 80 percent of Job Corps graduates received a high-quality placement by way of employment, enlisting in the military, or enrolling in higher education. Madam Secretary, I know that we have several students from the Potomac Job Corps Center here in attendance.

These students were on their way to getting a good job and earning a living wage, and I will ask them to stand up for a moment, all of the Job Corps participants. Thank you, and on behalf of them, Madam Secretary, I urge you to immediately reverse the decision to effectively shut down all Job Corps Centers. I understand the Federal Court has already intervened, and this matter will be in litigation probably for some time.

Thank you. Madam Secretary, the budget of the Department of Labor proposes cutting 4.5 billion dollars in discretionary funding, a 33 percent reduction in funding relative to Fiscal Year 2025, enacted level. I understand that during your budget hearing before the Appropriations Subcommittee you said that, “More money does not lead to best outcomes.”

I am looking forward to hearing from you today to explain how less money can lead to better outcomes. For example, how does this budget strengthen the Department’s enforcement of laws to guard against wage theft and exploitive child labor? How does this affect OSHA because OSHA has so few inspectors that right now it will take 185 years for the agency to visit every workplace within its jurisdiction, just once?

How will workers be safer with the proposed budget cuts? Finally, Madam Secretary, my Democratic colleagues and I have sent several oversight letters in the past several months, our office received one response just yesterday that did not really respond to the—all of the questions.

The American people deserve answers to many questions we have asked you about DOGE and Trump’s administration’s actions that impact workers, and we expect those responses to be prompt and complete. I look forward to your answers today and trust we will receive complete and thorough answers to our questions and particularly the questions we have asked in writing.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time. Thank you.
[The prepared statement of Ranking Member Scott follows:]

STATEMENT OF HON. ROBERT C. “BOBBY” SCOTT, RANKING MEMBER, COMMITTEE ON
EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Madam Secretary, it is always good to see a former colleague welcome back to the committee you served on. It was good to talk to you early this week, and I understand you have been in touch with every member of the committee, Democrat and Republican, and that obviously is a good way to start, and we look forward to working with you with that spirit.

Secretary, your charge with the mission of carrying out is and I quote, “to foster, develop, and promote the welfare of wage earners, job seekers, and retirees of the United States. Improve working conditions and advance job opportunities for profitable employment, and ensure work-related benefits and rights.”

Today, you are appearing before this Committee to explain the budget and policy priorities as detailed in the Department’s Fiscal Year 2026 budget proposal.

The Speaker Emerita, Nancy Pelosi, stated many times, “Show me your budget and I will tell you your values.” That is why the meeting on the budget is so important.

Madam Secretary, your written testimony states that you promised to put American workers first and that you indicated many areas where there may be bipartisan support. For example, the expansion of the Department of Labor’s certified registered apprenticeships is one area where I think we have good bipartisan support.

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Unfortunately, instead of pursuing initiatives with bipartisan support, the Administration has taken many actions that I believe have taken us in the opposite direction: jeopardizing jobs, endangering the rights and protections of workers, and undermining the financial security of retirees.

Specifically, since January 2025, this Administration has:

- Rescinded the landmark executive order in effect for 50 years, protecting federal contract workers and job applicants from discrimination;
- Rescinded an executive order that raised wages for federal contractors;
- Illegally fired the Inspectors General (IG) at the Labor Department (DOL) and several other agencies, who are charged with rooting out waste, fraud, and abuse;
- Delayed enforcement of a rule protecting coal miners from silica exposure; and
- Terminated grants that combat child labor and promote workers’ rights.

In other actions, the Administration:

- Fired a member of the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), leaving the NLRB without a quorum to function and issue decisions;
- Fired two Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) Commissioners, who were in the middle of their terms. This has never happened in the agency’s 60-year history, leaving the EEOC without a quorum to address illegal claims of workplace discrimination;
- Stripped the collective bargaining rights of more than one million federal workers; and

• In addition to these concerns, Madam Secretary, we are concerned about what Elon Musk and DOGE have been doing in the Department.

Many weeks ago, I asked you if Musk had access to confidential files or investigations of his businesses, including the name of a potential witness, and whether or not he had access to the Bureau of Labor Statistics information, like job numbers, before they were made public. Now whether he has counting access to that information and we have not received an answer yet.

We are also concerned about what is going on at the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA). One of the Labor Department’s first moves in this Administration was to revoke the provisional job offers of dozens of new MSHA inspectors.

Madam Secretary, I was on this Committee when we investigated the tragedy in Sago and then the tragedy at Upper Big Branch. One of the most important lessons we learned from those tragedies was that we must invest in MSHA’s pipeline of talent so that qualified inspectors will be there to ensure safety in these dangerous jobs. We know that the process takes years.

Madam Secretary, in your testimony in other committees, you have had questions about the abrupt closure of all Job Corps Centers across the nation.

Since its inception in 1964, Job Corps has trained over three million young Americans in various trades, including welding, carpentry, medical assistant, and a lot of others. Which you know has bipartisan support in Congress—trains young, low-in-

come people, helps them find good-paying jobs, and provides housing for a population that might otherwise be without a home.

I agree with your letter you sent to the House Appropriations Committee on May 1, 2024, you argued that “In fact, studies show that Job Corps increases participants’ employment and wages and decreases their reliance on public benefits. In the most recently completed program year, nearly 80 percent of Job Corps graduates received a high-quality placement via employment, enlisting in the military, or enrolling in higher education.”

Madam Secretary, I want you to know that we have several students from the Potomac Job Corps Center here in attendance. These students were on their way to getting a good job and earning a living wage. I would ask the students to stand up for a moment, all of the Job Corps participants.

Thank you, and on behalf of them, Madam Secretary, I urge you to immediately reverse the decision to effectively shut down all Job Corps centers. I understand that a Federal Court has already intervened, and this matter will likely be under litigation for some time.

Madam Secretary, the budget proposes cutting \$4.5 billion in discretionary funding—a 33.1 percent reduction in funding relative to the Fiscal Year 2025 enacted level.

I understand that, during your budget hearing before the Appropriations Subcommittee, you said that “more money does not lead to the best outcome.” Madame Secretary, I am looking forward to hearing from you today about how less money can lead to better outcomes.

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How does this affect OSHA? OSHA has so few inspectors that it would take 185 years for the agency to visit every workplace within its jurisdiction just once. How will workers be safer with the cuts proposed in this budget?

Finally, Madam Secretary, my Democratic colleagues and I have sent you several oversight letters over the past several months. Our office finally received one response that did not really respond to the questions. The American people deserve an answer to the questions we have asked you about DOGE, and the Trump Administration’s actions that impact workers. We expect those responses to be prompt and complete.

I look forward to your answers today and trust that we will receive complete and thorough answers to our questions. In particular, the questions we have asked in writing.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

Chairman WALBERG. I thank the gentleman. Pursuant to Committee Rule 8(c), all members who wish to insert written statements into the record may do so by submitting them to the Committee Clerk electronically in Microsoft Word format by 5 p.m., 14 days after this hearing, and without objection, the hearing record will remain open for 14 days to allow such statements and other extraneous material noted during the hearing to be submitted for the official hearing record.

I will now turn to the introduction of today’s witness. The Honorable Lori M. Chavez-DeRemer, Secretary of the U.S. Department of Labor. Madam Secretary, we thank you for being here today. We thank you for reaching out to our Committee members on both sides of the aisle.

As you are aware, it is your responsibility to provide accurate information to the Committee. Pursuant to Committee Rules, I would ask that you limit your oral presentation to a 5-minute summary of your written statement before questioning. Madam Secretary, you are welcome, and you are recognized for your testimony.

**STATEMENT OF HON. LORI CHAVEZ-DeREMÉR, SECRETARY,
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR, WASHINGTON, D.C.**

Secretary CHAVEZ-DeREMÉR. Chairman Walberg, Ranking Member Scott, and members of the Committee, thank you for the invitation to testify today. It is an honor to appear before the Committee as the 30th Secretary of Labor, to share the important work this administration is doing at the Department and discuss the President's Fiscal Year 2026 budget request.

My role as Secretary is to ensure the American worker is at the center of our economic strategy. These workers have rallied behind President Trump and given him a clear mandate. It is my job to guarantee that they are not just heard, but respected and prioritized at every level of government.

From the moment I was sworn in on March 11th, I promised to put American workers first, and that mission has guided me from the very beginning. Through the common sense reforms, we will focus the Department of Labor on that same purpose. Saving taxpayer resources, while safeguarding protections that are critical to the health and well-being of our workforce, like enforcement efforts, inspectors, and investigators.

Additionally, I am committed to having an open-door policy with every worker. As their liaison and advocate, I am dedicated to painting an accurate picture of labor's needs and concerns. I launched my listening tour, America at Work, to hear directly from the men and women who are living this day in and day out.

From a training facility demonstration with the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers in Pennsylvania, to a day spent with apprentices learning to become aviation mechanics in Nevada, I am experiencing and relaying the everyday challenges and triumphs of America at work. These insights are imperative to shaping Federal labor policies and practices.

To help employers and stakeholders better understand existing labor laws and provide them with much needed transparency, the Department of Labor launched our opinion letter program this week across five of our enforcement agencies. This key tool puts practical guidance into the hands of the public, while improving compliance, and giving workers and employers peace of mind.

Putting American workers and businesses first is a priority I share with President Trump and he is delivering with nearly 10 trillion in private investments and almost a half a million new jobs. To further stimulate our economic comeback, the Trump administration is overhauling the waste and abuse that has characterized the Federal Government's use of tax dollars for decades.

The Labor Department is looking at ways to streamline Federal programs and evaluate how taxpayer dollars are spent. In line with this approach, the budget proposes to eliminate ineffective training interventions, and that does include the Job Corps program.

Our recently released Job Corps transparency report showed that in 2023 alone, more than 14,000 serious incidents were reported at the Job Corps centers, including cases of sexual assault, physical violence, and drug use.

This program is failing to deliver safe and successful outcomes our young people deserve. At the same time, it costs an average of almost 20,000 more per year for a student to attend Job Corps than

it does for a student to attend Harvard. Our nation's vulnerable young adults deserve better, and I am committed with all of you, to achieving the safest and most successful outcomes possible.

Consistent with these efforts, the President's Fiscal Year 2026 budget gives states the flexibility to spend workforce dollars in the way that makes the most sense for them. By consolidating siloed Federal job programs into single Make America Skilled Again grants, states and localities will be able to spend more time and money delivering high-quality training for their workers.

Pursuant to two critical executive orders, my department is hard at work collaborating with the Department of Commerce and Education to unlock the potential of the American worker. We are looking to strengthen registered apprenticeships, modernize workforce development programs, and invest in opportunities that upskill workers to meet current labor market demands.

Now, before I take your questions, I do want to address at the outset there are likely questions that will cover issues subject to litigation as the Ranking Member mentioned, and I will not be able to provide the detailed responses that you were looking for in this setting.

I understand you all want answers, and I will make the same promise to you that I made to the Chairman on our call. Even if I cannot provide the details today, I remain committed to working with you on the issues that impact your constituents. I believe, as all of you do, that we must work together to foster an economy that ensures that every American can thrive, with good pay, safe working conditions, and a secure retirement.

It is my honor to work on behalf of President Trump as we bring jobs back to the United States and put the American worker first again. I look forward to working with Congress on these goals and continuing this important discussion today. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Secretary Chavez-DeRemer follows:]

STATEMENT OF LORI CHAVEZ-DEREMER, SECRETARY, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

Chairman Walberg, Ranking Member Scott, and Members of the Committee, thank you for the invitation to testify today. It is an honor to appear before the Subcommittee to share the important work this administration is doing at the Department of Labor. It is a privilege to serve as the 30th Secretary of Labor and to lead the department's efforts on behalf of President Trump and the American workforce.

My role as secretary is to ensure the American worker is at the center of our economic strategy. The middle class, union workers, and small businesses have given us a clear mandate. It is my job to guarantee those men and women are not just heard, but respected and prioritized at every level of government.

As a small business owner and as the daughter of a Teamster, I understand firsthand the innate desire of all Americans to see their hard work respected, their labor worthwhile, and their families supported. I have seen the power of a paycheck and what it means for the individual, their families, and their communities. Now, I get to help secure the best wages, most meaningful retirements, and safest workplaces for families like mine.

From the moment I was sworn in on March 11th, I promised to put American workers first—and that mission has guided my work from the very beginning. Through commonsense reforms, we will focus the Department of Labor on that same purpose—maximizing opportunities for American workers with a smaller federal footprint, while safeguarding protections that are critical to the health and wellbeing of our workforce, like enforcement efforts, inspectors, and investigators.

Additionally, I am committed to having an open-door policy for every worker.

AMERICA AT WORK

As a former mayor, I have always found that getting the best results requires listening first, not one-size-fits-all mandates. That is why I launched my nationwide listening tour, America at Work, to travel to communities across the country, engaging, learning, and bringing hardworking Americans' feedback with me to Washington. Their real-world insights and experiences are imperative to shaping federal labor policies and practices.

I intend to visit all 50 states to better understand regional workforce needs, and we are making good headway. I have held many meetings with local leaders to discover more ways that the federal government can help develop a skilled workforce, improve infrastructure to attract business and investment, prioritize workers, and identify smart regulations that expand economic opportunity and drive job growth.

From a training facility demonstration with the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers in Pennsylvania, to a day spent with students learning to become aviation mechanics in Nevada, I am experiencing and relaying the real-world challenges and triumphs of America at work. We have a responsibility to turn these stories into actions through smart reforms and federal solutions that deliver real results.

From region to region, what I have seen on the ground is a sense of relief and gratitude from those men and women who feel heard, respected, and empowered by this president. I have assured those workers that they will not be left behind by Washington any longer. Their voices will be valued, amplified, and reflected in our policies and budget.

I look forward to continuing my trek across the country so that as we expand our job market, I can ensure employers, businesses, and community leaders have the tools necessary to recruit and retain new workers to fill those roles.

SUPPORTING THE AMERICAN WORKER

Since January 20, 2025, our job market has surpassed expectations. We saw more than 464,000 jobs created, including in critical sectors like manufacturing and construction. The recent jobs report for the month of April was another consecutive win for our economy, with 177,000 new jobs added. These explosive reports have been indicative of the America First strategy's success, a strategy which places workers at the top of the totem pole of priorities.

This worker-centric approach is part of the broader economic momentum President Trump is driving. With more than \$10 trillion in private investments so far, Americans are seeing great progress in the growth of our jobs, our economy, and our competitive edge.

To further stimulate economic growth, the Trump Administration is overhauling the waste, fraud, and abuse that has characterized the federal government's use of tax dollars for decades. The Department of Labor is eliminating unnecessary red tape that stifles innovation. We are on track to restore freedom and purchasing power back to hardworking men and women.

The President's budget outlines a proposal that streamlines bureaucracy and focuses the Department's agencies on their statutorily mandated work. The funding requests for the Mine Safety and Health Administration, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, and the Wage and Hour Division direct our efforts toward conducting inspections and investigations to ensure all workers are kept safe. We remain committed to providing businesses with the necessary clarity and guidance they require to know and understand their legal obligations without unnecessary red tape. To be clear: under my leadership, we will not be weaponizing these agencies against businesses. Most businesses want to do the right thing, but burdensome and unnecessarily complicated regulations have made it harder for them to operate. Nonetheless, businesses that are illegally employing children in high-hazard, dangerous occupations should know we are watching and will not hesitate to bring the full force of the law against them.

Further, we are looking at ways taxpayer dollars have been spent to see how we can improve. For example, the Labor Department recently uncovered \$4.4 billion of unspent and unusable COVID funding and is actively working to return that money to the Treasury in its entirety. I also put states on notice, warning governors that rewarding illegal immigration by granting unemployment benefits to illegal immigrants will result in the loss of federal funds. I will continue to safeguard tax dollars and prevent their misuse because when Americans' hard-earned money is not wasted, more of their paychecks can go towards the things that actually matter: putting food on the table, gas in cars, and providing stability for our families.

In keeping with that goal of streamlining our department and running an efficient operation, I have canceled over \$250 million in America Last handouts. Taxpayers

will no longer be footing the bill for things like “enhancing transparency and accountability in Uzbekistan’s cotton industry.”

Restoring meritocracy has been another key facet of the America First agenda, so my team and I have eliminated harmful Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives wherever they cropped up. To that extent, we conducted a major overhaul of the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP), which for years enforced discriminatory DEI and Affirmative Action requirements against companies doing business with the federal government. After these much-needed reforms, qualified federal contract staff will no longer have to worry about losing out on a paycheck because of their race, gender, or any other factor extraneous to their performance on the job.

With our workers as the cornerstone of our economic comeback, these policies matter. I stand ready to equip, train, and support our workforce so they can thrive in an ever-changing job market.

VISION FOR WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

To stay competitive both at home and abroad, Registered Apprenticeships and skilled trades pipelines are essential. Every individual brings value to our workforce and deserves the tools to thrive.

Consistent with these efforts, the President’s FY 2026 Budget gives states and localities flexibility to spend workforce dollars in the way that makes the most sense for their areas. By consolidating siloed federal job training programs into a single Make America Skilled Again Grant, states and localities will be able to spend more time and money delivering high-quality training for their workers and less time complying with burdensome federal program requirements. This streamlined approach will enable states to more effectively cater to their specific industry and population needs. For example, states with a significant population of unemployed young adults will have the autonomy to target funding to this group without the federal bureaucracy mandating precisely which dollar gets spent serving each population.

In line with this approach, the budget also proposes to eliminate ineffective federal training interventions, including the Senior Community Service Employment Program and the Job Corps program. Job Corps is a financially unsustainable and oftentimes dangerous program, with an exorbitant per-graduate cost and an alarming number of serious incidents reported by participants. It costs an average of almost \$20,000 more per year for a student to attend Job Corps than it does for a student to attend Harvard. The program, which has roughly 25,000 participants, saw 14,913 serious incidents reported in 2023, ranging from sexual assault to physical violence and drug use. The evidence is overwhelming: Job Corps is not leading to successful outcomes, and it is not sustainable for students or taxpayers. That is why we made the decision to pause Job Corps operations last week. Our nation’s vulnerable young adults deserve better, and I am committed to connecting all participants with the resources they need to succeed as this transition takes place and as we evaluate future possibilities.

Pursuant to two critical Executive Orders, the Department of Labor is collaborating with the Departments of Commerce and Education to unlock the potential of the American worker. We are looking to strengthen Registered Apprenticeships, modernize workforce development programs, and invest in opportunities that upskill workers to meet current labor market demands.

Through President Trump’s Executive Order, “Preparing Americans for High-Paying, Skilled Trade Jobs of the Future,” we have set a bold goal of reaching over one million new active apprentices. Together with my peers, I will be presenting President Trump with a streamlined and integrated plan to re-orient federal workforce programs to prepare the American economy for the opportunities presented by re-shoring and re-industrialization.

I am confident that we will deliver on that plan through the collaboration we have fostered with local unions, businesses, colleges, and community leaders as we seek to bring everyone to the table. The Labor Department will act as a bridge, providing resources and tools that encourage states and communities to provide tailored apprenticeships and workforce development opportunities that directly tie to the needs of their local industries.

Expanding educational opportunities and resources for our students across the country is another crucial element to this robust vision. Utilizing existing career and technical education pathways to expose students at younger ages and leveraging post-secondary education funding, we will work to enhance connections between the education system and the high-paying skilled trade jobs of the future. It is imperative that we support interests in technical and skilled jobs from an early age.

As promised, I will work to expand Registered Apprenticeships into untapped industries and occupations, especially in high-growth and emerging sectors.

Since January 20, 2025, almost 83,000 new apprentices registered in programs, and over 900 new apprenticeship programs have been registered across the National Apprenticeship System. I anticipate even greater progress now that we have the momentum of the President's Executive Orders guiding federal, state, and local entities.

Developing artificial intelligence (AI)-oriented apprenticeships is also essential for preparing workers to meet labor market demands and technological challenges. As part of the new White House Task Force on Artificial Intelligence Education, I am excited to identify resources and tools that help our next generation tackle the AI questions of the future.

It is a known fact that AI is changing our world and how we fit into it. It is incredibly important that our children have every opportunity to thrive in that environment. From an early age, our future workers must gain expertise and tools to drive innovation and become empowered leaders of tomorrow. To maintain America's global dominance in an age of technological revolution, Registered Apprenticeships, and even school curricula, must adapt to meet AI literacy and proficiency needs.

I will work with Deputy Secretary Sonderling and the White House to leverage authorities and financial incentives to increase participation in AI-related apprenticeships, encourage states to develop work-based learning opportunities, and promote high-quality AI skills education coursework across the country. Our American workers continue to be the backbone of our country, and we will do everything we can to ensure they remain on the cutting edge of technological advancements and global competition.

I know that by revitalizing our workforce and preparing them for the jobs of tomorrow, we will breathe life into the American Dream. I believe, as you all do, that we must work together to foster an economy that ensures every American can thrive with good pay, safe working conditions, and a secure retirement. It is my honor to work on behalf of President Trump as we bring jobs back to the United States and put the American worker first again.

I look forward to working with Congress on these important goals.

Chairman WALBERG. I now recognize—under Rule Committee 9, we will now question Secretary Chavez-DeRemer under the 5-minute rule, and I will attempt to keep a little bit more closely that 5 minutes of questioning today. Do not force me to do too much in latitude on that, so although there will be some flexibility.

We want to make sure that all members, including those sitting at the end of the dais have an opportunity to ask questions as well in a reasonable time period. I now recognize myself for 5 minutes of questioning.

Madam Secretary, association health plans, AHPs, are a type of group plan that allow multiple employers to band together to purchase health coverage in a reasonable fashion. Very much taken after unions opportunity because of the size and numbers. In 2018, the first Trump administration published a rule expanding AHPs that produce significant savings on healthcare coverage for covered employers.

In April 2024, the Biden-Harris administration rescinded the 2019 Trump Rule without any alternative. Can you discuss the advantages of allowing small businesses to band together to offer coverage through AHPs?

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Yes. Thank you so much for the question, Chairman. It is one of the things I hear often about the cost of healthcare. President Trump has been addressing that by lowering the cost of prescription drugs, but as we band together, and as you mentioned, somewhat of a coalition of businesses get-

ting together in order to be able to purchase healthcare plans for their employees I think is key to lowering those costs.

I know that my office is working with you on this piece of legislation for technical assistance. It is one of the honors really of the Department of Labor and other agencies that we can do with all Congressmen and women if they are working on legislation with their colleagues, I can be useful with my Department heads to give you that technical assistance.

We need to lower premiums and out of pocket costs for employees, expanding affordable care for the American worker.

Chairman WALBERG. We appreciate that because frankly in the end it provides better coverage as well, and we want that for our employees, and the benefit to employers to offer those special benefits. Last year the Committee learned that the Employees Benefits Security Administration, EBSA, shared secret information obtained during investigations with Plaintiffs' attorneys.

What steps has and will DOL take to understand the extent of aid that career staff have given, and are giving to Plaintiffs' attorneys, and the extent of confidential information that has been shared, and is being shared?

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Well, as you know, Chairman, any sort of leak that comes out of any agency or the Department of Labor is concerning when there is allegations that confidential information would be leaked under the Biden Administration.

Under my leadership this is unacceptable and I would not tolerate it for anybody to leak that information of privacy. I am aware that your Committee has asked the Department of the Inspector General to investigate this, and I cannot comment on an investigation if there is one happening, and that would be true for anybody who is asking that question.

Again, I will cooperate fully with the Inspector General's Office to determine the best outcome in the review under the Biden administration's enforcement programs to make sure that we are addressing any possible leaks that would come out of the Department of Labor.

Chairman WALBERG. Thank you. Human trafficking is an issue that remains one of the greatest challenges of our time. Roughly 1 in 6 endangered runaways reported to the Center for Missing and Exploited Children is likely a victim of child sex trafficking. These are horrid crimes committed by those who prey on innocent and vulnerable victims.

During the last Congress I sponsored the Enhancing Detection of Human Trafficking Act. This legislation offers a viable avenue to equip Department of Labor Personnel with the necessary tools and information to understand and ascertain where that sexual exploitation, human trafficking is taking place.

Can I get your commitment to review the bill as it is reintroduced to ensure it takes the most effective steps for the Department of Labor to take part in the fight against human trafficking?

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Absolutely, Chairman. We in Congress, and anybody in the United States, should never tolerate any child trafficking, any human trafficking, any child labor violations, and it is my commitment to you that I will work with your office, and all offices, to combat that at all costs. We will double down

knowingly, when we know someone is breaking the law, and have our inspectors address this always.

Chairman WALBERG. I appreciate that.

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Of course.

Chairman WALBERG. What are your views, Madam Secretary, on opening avenues and increasing accessibility to pursue short-term educational skills training opportunities?

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. This is where you will see my smile because I can tell you as I am on the road and understanding the need for workforce demands as we move through skilling and reskilling, or upskilling our workforce, that we have to address at all costs that not all are going to receive a 4-year degree, that we have to offer that in our local communities, and work with our community colleges and technical schools, so that we have access to those degrees so that our workforce is ready to go on day one.

This is a question that I get asked often on the road, and I will work with the Department of Labor for the accessibility and flexibility of the modernization of the current workforce that we are seeing today.

Chairman WALBERG. Thank you. Thank you. My time has expired. I now recognize the gentleman from Connecticut, Mr. Courtney.

Mr. COURTNEY. Thank you Mr. Chairman, and again I want to join my colleagues in welcoming the Secretary back to her Committee, and again I appreciate the phone call the other day when we had a chance to compare notes on a number of issues, in particular, and you mentioned this in your opening remarks, your reference to using the registered apprenticeship program as the framework for expanding and growing.

Apprentice is a welcome message in terms of the Fitzgerald Act, which actually my predecessor in the 1930's, William Fitzgerald, was the sponsor of that law, and has done great things all across the country and it is the right framework in terms of setting national standards, so that all across the country people who see those certificates know that there is real quality behind that certificate.

I want to focus for a second on one of the issues that is part of your mission, which again, Mr. Scott mentioned is to guarantee the welfare of American workers, which is the OSHA. Your predecessor in the Trump administration, Secretary Acosta, actually commenced a rulemaking process for a workplace violence prevention standard in healthcare and social workers, which has still been sort of chugging along within the Department.

Again, this is a measure that is in my opinion, to address an emergency, which is the incredible rates of violence that nurses, EMTs, emergency room physicians, are facing at a frightening pace and rate over the years. This Committee has done a lot of work in terms of the data collection that validates and demonstrates how serious this problem is.

The rule that is before your Department right now is something, which again we enacted twice in prior Congresses on a bipartisan basis, and there is a bill that myself and Mr. Bacon have introduced as well.

Basically, it would set up a prevention system that is actually tried and true in some parts of the country, which provides training for medical staff in terms of how to de-escalate situations, basically identifying high-risk patients, whether in a psych hospital or in an emergency room, which is where again the highest intensity of really serious injuries take place.

It gives again tools to people, whether it is panic buttons, you know, systems of communication in terms of flagging high-risk patients that are there. Again, I want to just emphasize, Madam Secretary, this is a life and death situation. We have had, you know, incidents reported in from all over the country of people who have lost their lives because of inadequate safeguards that are out there.

One of them is a 63 year-old home health nurse from Eastern Connecticut who was stabbed to death a couple years ago on a home health visit. A high-risk patient was actually on a sex offender list and walked into that house completely sort of unequipped to sort of address what again ended her life.

You know, the tragedy still resonates today. Again, it has gone through the small business SBREFA panel, during the last administration. Again, the next steps are still ahead, and I really would ask your commitment to really making sure that the 15 million healthcare workers that are a huge part of America's workforce are going to see real action in your department in terms of advancing this rule.

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Well, thank you, Congressman. Thank you again for the conversation on the phone. Just in a few seconds I want to address the apprenticeships that you mentioned.

Mr. COURTNEY. Yes, I actually would like you to talk really about the OSHA. We agree on the apprenticeships, so no issue there.

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. I will. My goal is 1 million apprentices in order to enhance that.

Mr. COURTNEY. That is fine.

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. We are taking a look at all of the rulemaking because I think it is key. I can speak from a former Congressman, that is one of the issues that I heard on the ground oftentimes was workplace safety, and now as a Secretary of Labor. Understanding that is one of the core missions is to protect our workforce.

No worker should ever have to determine whether or not they are going to go home safe at the end of the day. That is one of the core missions. It will be something that I always look at. In the promulgation of rulemaking, while I cannot discuss it while it is in rulemaking, it is key for the Department of Labor.

Mr. COURTNEY. You know, really, it is just a commitment to move forward. I am not asking for details. Before my 20 seconds, I just want to make sure you know over 30 professional organizations, American Nurses Association, American College Emergency Room Physicians, labor who represents nursing and healthcare workers, including your father's union, the Teamsters, have endorsed this measure.

Again, the burnout and the harm that is occurring out there threatens healthcare access in this country, let alone the life and health of the people who are the caregivers that are doing so much for it.

I really implore you to follow through what was started out in Trump 1.0 through the last administration, and is now actively on the agenda at the Department of Labor today. With that I yield back.

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Well, I 100 percent agree with you more that we need to protect our workforce. My husband is in the medical field. I understand it dearly, and I will work with your office completely as we move through this process. Thank you.

Chairman WALBERG. I thank the gentleman. I now recognize the gentleman from South Carolina, Mr. Wilson.

Mr. WILSON. Thank you very much, Chairman Tim Walberg for your positive leadership, and indeed, Secretary, America appreciates your service and we wish you best success.

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Thank you.

Mr. WILSON. By statute the Department of Labor must ensure that employment of H2A workers does not adversely affect domestic workers. To that end, the DOL has established the adverse effect wage rate, which is applied annually to H-2A employees.

The national universe of effective wage rate has already more than doubled over the past two decades, making agricultural guest labor unaffordable for farm employers, and resulting in higher consumer costs. I am concerned for the farmers and ranchers who use H-2A, as these skyrocketing costs will only compound inflated input costs for energy and fertilizer.

Other guest worker expenses like transportation and housing and burdens from several impending Federal regulations and fees. There are bipartisan discussions in Congress in support of freezing the adverse effect wage rate, and I am also concerned there is no actual effort on the annual basis to determine whether an adverse effect actually exists at the Department.

Have you considered making a determination as to an adverse effect actually exists or discuss making other reforms to modernize and improving the adverse effect rate and H-2A program consistent with your authority under the law?

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Yes, thank you Congressman. I appreciate you bringing up the determination from the Department of Labor on how we address the H programs. In particular, H-2A, H-2B, and as they affect our farmers, ranchers, and producers. We have heard this often, and what can be sustainable and unsustainable over time.

As we continue through the rulemaking, and that process, I work with my colleagues at the Department of Homeland, as well as the Department of State to determine we never want to displace the American worker, but we recognize that the workforce is needed for our farmers and our ranchers.

I have heard this throughout, so we will continue as we go through regulations and rulemaking on it. I am very familiar, as I sat on that Subcommittee in my time in Congress to address the issues, because it is unsustainable, and we have to make sure that we are protecting those farmers and ranchers.

I will commit to you that I will continue to work with your office and many others as we address that along with USDA Secretary Brooke Rollins.

Mr. WILSON. Indeed. I appreciate you recognize that each community has a different workforce need. I know that in my home State we have particular seasonal employment. We are getting reach for the peach season, and I want to make sure that Chairwoman Foxx has sufficient ability to buy peaches, and so we like to point out even to people in remote locations like Michigan, that South Carolina produces more peaches than another State called Georgia. Okay.

In addition—but hey, it is seasonal, and we have the same thing with row crops in my home county of Lexington. To do that and—how does the Department of Labor play in helping to meet the local workforce needs?

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Well, that is the determination on both angles. One, we want to develop the American workforce first, and work with our partners at the State level. The second is, we have seen the increase over the time of the visa program. The expansion has been tremendous because we cannot always find that workforce.

From the Department of Labor's perspective, it is my responsibility to test that market and then work with the Department of Homeland Secretary Noem, and then work with Congress on determining what that cap will be and then enforce those laws.

We hear it often. We hear it every day, and it is my direction for the Department of Labor to almost—we are working through it, and my agency to have a specific sub-agency to determine and work with you all specifically, just for the H programs because they have become so prominent in how we are going to address this.

You are correct, the one size fits all no longer works. It is modernizing and streamlining the workforce that our American workers can thrive, and our businesses can as well.

Mr. WILSON. Again, I appreciate you being ahead of the curve. Additionally, the last administration final rule on H2A adverse effect wage rate also made it difficult with employers to determine wages. What is the compliance of DOL to help agricultural employment determine wage rate?

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. We will work with our State partners, a lot of those are determined at the State level. We will work with them to make sure that we are enforcing this, but they have to be in line with what is acceptable and not.

As we go through rulemaking and regulation, I will be reaching out to your offices and working with our stakeholders to determine what is best for the American economy.

Mr. WILSON. Again, thank you so much for your leadership. I yield back.

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Thank you.

Chairman WALBERG. I thank the gentleman for his produce advertising. You are a peach of a guy. Forgive me for that. I now take great pleasure of recognizing the lady from Oregon, Ms. Bonamici.

Ms. BONAMICI. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Welcome back to the Committee, Secretary Chavez-DeRemer, and thank you for your phone call, I appreciated the conversation.

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Of course.

Ms. BONAMICI. I want to start by recognizing the anniversary of the Department of Labor's Women's Bureau which turns 105 years

old today. Unfortunately, under your leadership the Department is trying to eliminate the Women's Bureau, which would mean the end of WANTO, which is a program for women in apprenticeship and nontraditional occupations.

I just want to say I hope that this administration is not trying to close a successful program in this important bureau because the word women is in the title. What I want to talk about is a followup on our conversation about Job Corps. As you know, our home State of Oregon has three Job Corps centers under the jurisdiction of the Department of Labor.

Two of those are in the district I represent. Pivot in Portland and Tongue Point in Astoria, which is residential. A year and a half ago you proudly announced on social media that the National Job Corps Association named you a Job Corps Champion, and I have a reminder of that here.

I would also like to submit for the record a bipartisan Appropriation's letter requesting maintained funding for Job Corp in Fiscal Year 2025, which you signed. I would like to submit that to the record, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman WALBERG. Without objection, it will be submitted.

[The information of Ms. Bonamici follows:]

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 1, 2024

Chairman Robert Aderholt
 Subcommittee on Labor, Health and
 Human Services, Education, and
 Related Agencies
 House Appropriations Committee
 2358B Rayburn HOB
 Washington, DC 20515

Ranking Member Rosa L. DeLauro
 Subcommittee on Labor, Health, and
 Human Services, Education, and
 Related Agencies
 House Appropriations Committee
 1016 Longworth HOB
 Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Aderholt and Ranking Member DeLauro:

As you prepare the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year (FY) 2025, we urge you to maintain funding levels to allow our nation's Job Corps campuses to sustain their full operational capacity, assist staff capacity, and address the backlog of safety-related facility needs identified by the U.S. Department of Labor.

According to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, there are now more than [9.5 million job openings](#) but only 6.5 million unemployed workers. Most jobs require training beyond a high school diploma but not a college degree. Job Corps is one of the few national programs that specifically targets this population and provides a direct pathway into employment, including the construction and manufacturing industries, higher education, or the military. By filling these job openings, Job Corps ensures that young people become productive members of the labor force. In fact, [studies](#) show that Job Corps increases participants' employment and wages and decreases their reliance on public benefits. In the most recently completed program year, [nearly 80% of Job Corps graduates](#) received a high quality placement via employment, enlisting in the military or enrolling in higher education.

Job Corps has the capacity to serve more than 50,000 out-of-work and out-of-school youth each year. However, this capacity is limited by the same staffing challenges faced by schools nationwide as well as more than [\\$715 million backlog](#) in facility and infrastructure projects. We encourage you to support investments to ensure our local Job Corps campuses can connect as many young Americans as possible with careers. Job Corps FY 2025 appropriations also should include resources to improve staff hiring and retention as well as to continue to address the substantial backlog in Job Corps construction, rehabilitation, and acquisition projects identified by the U.S. Department of Labor.

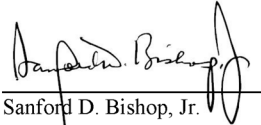
We appreciate your ongoing support of Job Corps. We urge you to support our request to provide sufficient funding for Job Corps to help meet employers' needs with skilled workers, secure qualified staff, and ensure that all Job Corps facilities are safe. Your support will allow Job Corps to continue its track record of providing effective career and technical education to many of the most vulnerable young Americans in our communities.

Thank you for your kind attention.

Sincerely,



Brett Guthrie
Member of Congress



Sanford D. Bishop, Jr.
Member of Congress



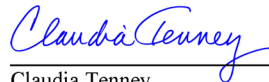
Jenniffer González-Colón
Member of Congress



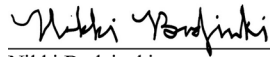
Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress



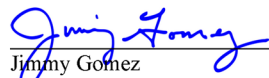
Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



Claudia Tenney
Member of Congress



Nikki Budzinski
Member of Congress



Jimmy Gomez
Member of Congress

Val Hoyle
Member of Congress

Lucy McBath
Member of Congress

Bennie G. Thompson
Member of Congress

Emanuel Cleaver, II
Member of Congress

Frank Pallone, Jr.
Member of Congress

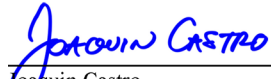
Paul D. Tonko
Member of Congress

Jim Himes
Member of Congress

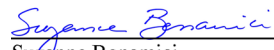
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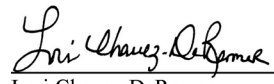
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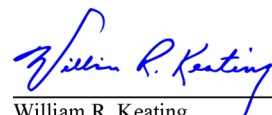

 Lori Chavez-DeRemer
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 John B. Larson
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 Donald M. Payne, Jr.
 Member of Congress


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 Member of Congress


 Earl L. "Buddy" Carter
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Jared Golden
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Mark DeSaulnier
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Sydney Kamlager-Dove
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Robin L. Kelly
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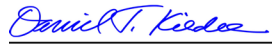
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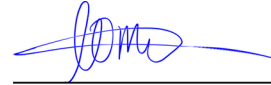
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 Suzan K. DelBene
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 Shontel M. Brown
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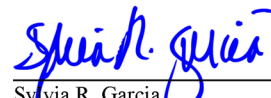

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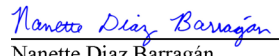

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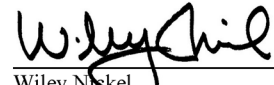

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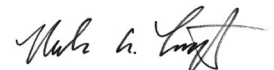

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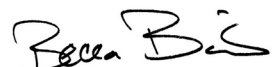

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 Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
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 Sean Casten
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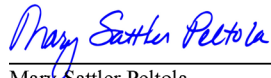

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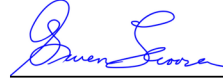

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 Greg Stanton
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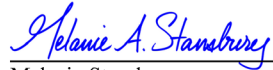
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Gwen S. Moore
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Michael R. Turner
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Melanie Stansbury
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Ritchie Torres
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Linda T. Sánchez
Member of Congress



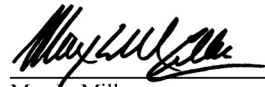
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Adam Smith
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Dina Titus
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Salud Carbajal
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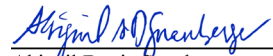
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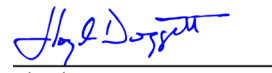

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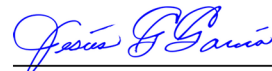

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Bill Pascrell, Jr.
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Jasmine Crockett
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Vicente Gonzalez
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Joe Courtney
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Robert Garcia

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Maxine Waters

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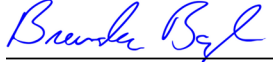
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James Comer

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John Garamendi

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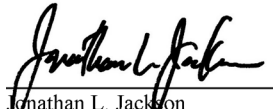

Jan Schakowsky
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Marc A. Veasey
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Lori Trahan
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Cori Bush
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Katie Porter
Member of Congress

MARK TAKANO
Member of Congress

Erin Houchin
Member of Congress

Elissa Slotkin
Member of Congress

Ms. BONAMICI. Thank you. Now, Madam Secretary, you made a starkly abrupt shift from a champion to a destroyer of this important program, and at the end of last week you ordered 99 Job Corps Centers across the country to shut down operations by June 30th, sending their students off campus no later than tomorrow, June 6th.

Fortunately, a Judge has blocked that effort at least temporarily, but I will tell you that the students are distraught and so are the local communities. On April 25th, the Department of Labor released a report titled, Job Corps Transparency Report. What role did DOGE have in that report?

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. I want to be clear, the decision was not to eliminate Job Corps, only Congress can eliminate Job Corps.

Ms. BONAMICI. I appreciate that, and I am going to followup on that, but I need to know what role DOGE had in this report, this Job Corps transparency report?

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. The Department of Labor does have the delegation and authority to halt those Center contracts, including program operations for Job Corps.

Ms. BONAMICI. What role did DOGE have? Sorry, Madam Secretary, I just want an answer, what role did DOGE have in that report?

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Thank you, Congresswoman. Based on what you just said in the last statement about the TRO that was given last night, it actually gives me great pause that I cannot discuss the details now because of that TRO, and as I mentioned on the outset, I want to give you these answers. I want to continue to have these conversations.

The transparency report is where I can lead and talk to you about. Those numbers were from 2023.

Ms. BONAMICI. Did DOGE write the report is my question?

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. The Department of Labor, the government efficiency employees, our Department of Labor employees, so if you are asking me about DOGE as in Department of Labor, yes, they are in every agency.

Ms. BONAMICI. Did they participate in writing that report?

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Yes. We were together and working with that report.

Ms. BONAMICI. I do note that there was an earlier version that was posted, and at a later date a staffer, who has been reported to be a staffer with DOGE, replaced that report. Is that accurate?

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. I do not know what you are referring to about replacing that report.

Ms. BONAMICI. There were two different versions apparently posted.

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Okay.

Ms. BONAMICI. I want to move on.

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. It is from program year 2023, those numbers.

Ms. BONAMICI. I mean you say the numbers are, but I am asking about this report specifically.

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Yes. The report from this year in 2023.

Ms. BONAMICI. As you noted, the Department of Labor called the contract terminations for Job Corps pauses, but yesterday the Oregonian, our hometown newspaper, wrote that a new operator is not expected to be named. Does the Department of Labor intend to reopen these campuses, and that is a yes or no question?

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Under the TRO granted by the Southern District of New York, I cannot discuss this further in detail.

Ms. BONAMICI. Madam Secretary, the fact that an issue is in litigation is not a sufficient legal basis to allow you to evade congressional oversight, and Secretary McMahon was here yesterday for hours and did not once use litigation as an excuse for not answering the question.

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Well, had I been here yesterday, I would not have had to use it either, but because that injunction was late last night, I have to respect the TROs in place.

Ms. BONAMICI. I will just note there are many injunctions against the Department of Education as well. If these are truly pauses, that would mean that the Department of Labor intends to reopen the campuses. If there is no plan or intent on reopening, they are closures. Which did you intend? To pause or to close?

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. We paused. We made a decision to do so. The Department of Labor has the delegation and authority to halt center operations and those contracts, including program operations for Job Corps sites. That being said, we are going to comply with the TRO that was issued late yesterday.

Ms. BONAMICI. I appreciate that. If you are saying it was a pause, that means that you intend to reopen those campuses, is that correct?

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. The report on replacing the report online is inaccurate. The first report posted—thank you. Thank you

for referring this, and it was reposted that same day, so that was to your question on the two reports.

Ms. BONAMICI. Yes, I appreciate that.

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. For clarification, thank you for—

Ms. BONAMICI. I need to get another question in. You know, I know you are going to comply with the temporary restraining order.

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Absolutely. We will comply.

Ms. BONAMICI. I appreciate that, but Secretary DeRemer, you say you are going to send these students back to their home of record. How many current Job Corps students are there?

Chairman WALBERG. The gentlelady's time has expired.

Ms. BONAMICI. If I could ask the Congresswoman, the Secretary to submit that. It is a really critical issue. These students do not have homes to go to.

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Congresswoman, we will work with your office if there is any exception to this TRO, I promise you I will answer your questions fully.

Ms. BONAMICI. Thank you. I will be submitting for the record, I yield back.

Chairman WALBERG. I thank the gentlelady. I now recognize the gentlelady from North Carolina, Mrs. Foxx.

Mrs. FOXX. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Sorry I did not get a phone call to talk to you.

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. I did. I tried to call you three times.

Mrs. FOXX. South Carolina peaches are great, and I want to associate myself with the comments of Mr. Wilson. I want to commend you for surrounding yourself with a great staff at the Department of Labor, maybe many of these people are familiar faces to us who have served on the Committee and I think they are going to do a great job.

I also want to commend you for your actions on Job Corps. Madam Secretary, in December 2020, Congress enacted the No Surprises Act in a bipartisan fashion to protect patients from surprise medical billings, and balance billing for surprise out of network services.

The law provides for a dispute resolution process. Data shows that most disputes are being resolved in favor of the provider, and costs may be rising. Please provide an update on DOL's role in implementing the No Surprises Act, and your plans to complete implementation?

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Well, I will kind of work backward, Dr. Foxx, and I am sorry that we did not get to connect, but we will continue this conversation. The Department continues to identify ways to improve that IDR process that you mentioned, and more timely payment determinations, because it is quite expensive of a process and we addressed that when I was in Congress as well.

The Department of Labor now, as a Secretary, we will make sure that that is more modernized and efficient and streamlined so that it does work.

Mrs. FOXX. If you could provide us with periodic reports on that because we can bring down the cost of healthcare dramatically if we fully implement this.

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Absolutely. We will work with your office.

Mrs. FOXX. I have another question. During the Biden-Harris administration the Pension Benefit Guarantee Corporation, PBGC, overpaid hundreds of millions of dollars in taxpayer money to multi-employer pension plans for deceased participants under the special financial assistance program of the American Rescue Plan.

When questioned during the previous administration by the Committee, PBGC's responses were deficient. About 67 plans may have received special financial assistance to pay non-existent liabilities to dead participants. To date, at least a dozen of these plans have still not paid back this money. As Secretary of Labor, you are the Chairwoman of PBGC's Board of Directors.

Can you provide us an update on the status of the multi-employer pension plans that receive special financial assistance to pay non-existence liabilities to dead participants?

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Well, under the Biden administration the PBGC failed to implement those necessary safeguards to ensure that the multi-employer pension plans were safeguarded. Those did include deceased participants in those applications.

However, it is imperative that the PBGC continues to ensure that integrity for those SFA programs, and to benefit the American worker first. As the Chairwoman, I do look forward to considering those important issues. I will work with the Secretaries.

I have Secretary of Treasury, Secretary of Commerce in doing so, and I am waiting for the nominee to direct the PBGC, Janet Dhillon to be confirmed soon to continue down that road, and I would like to work with your office on that as well.

Mrs. FOXX. Thank you. I again, like to have periodic reports like starting in a month until we get this cleared up

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Well, I look forward to her being confirmed, and I will do that. Yes, ma'am.

Mrs. FOXX. Thank you.

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Thank you, Dr. Foxx.

Mrs. FOXX. In February, President Trump issued Executive Order 14221 dedicated to fulfilling the promise of radical transparency in healthcare pricing information. This executive order builds on his executive order from 2019, requiring hospitals and health plans to provide Americans with meaningful price information to inform their decisions, and spur competition among providers that will drive down prices.

Can you provide us with an update on the Department's role in implementation and your plans to enforce this policy?

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. We will continue to work with the administration on all executive orders and be transparent with Congress on this issue. Again, as we move through this process in the last 60 to 90 days that I have been in office, it has been an honor to, you know, really do a thorough analysis, and so again, those periodic reviews will be coming forth.

Mrs. FOXX. Would you please highlight the recent Job Corps transparency report that came out and what you believe to be the most troubling aspect of the report?

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Well, I encourage all of my colleagues in Congress to look at that transparency report as it re-

lates to your respective Job Corps Centers. My goal is to protect this population, but through the transparency report specifically, the cost has been exorbitant. It is something that through the transparency report shows that it is not sustainable.

Fiscal year 2026 will show—excuse me, 2025, will show 214 million dollars in arrears that I cannot go further into detail. I highly encourage the rest of my colleagues, so we can work together in order to have a skilled workforce for the young population that we so deeply care about, and why many of us were Job Corps champions in Congress, and I look forward to working with you all.

Please, I am glad to—it is public, but other than that and the TRO, I cannot just go into further detail.

Mrs. FOXX. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Chairman WALBERG. I thank the gentlelady. I now recognize the gentleman from California, Mr. Takano.

Mr. TAKANO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for being here today, Madam Secretary.

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Thank you, Congressman.

Mr. TAKANO. You are welcome. I want to talk about overtime protections, strong overtime protections that help America's middle class, and ensure that workers are not overworked and underpaid. As you know, the Secretary of Labor holds statutory authority to set the overtime threshold for non-exempt salaried workers under the Fair Labor Standards Act.

Madam Secretary, what is your position on the appropriate overtime threshold, and what that should be for salaried workers?

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Well, thank you, Congressman for bringing that up. As we move through a lot of the overtime stuff that is in litigation, I know this is not the answer that we all want to hear when we are sitting on that side of the dais. I will continue—

Mr. TAKANO. I am going to accept, I mean the rulemaking.

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Sure, yes.

Mr. TAKANO. You cannot comment on as you go through rulemaking on what that salary threshold should be, right?

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Yes.

Mr. TAKANO. Have you in fact made a decision to appeal the judgment?

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Yes. As you are aware, the Overtime Rule that you are mentioning in the Biden administration, is currently under litigation, and limited. I will say this, the Department is reviewing all the rules and issues by the Biden administration.

The Department's jurisdiction and overseeing the overtime regulations is critical. It is critical to all of the workforce, and we have a duty to periodically review that authority and ensure—and I will continue to do those periodic reviews, and work with all Members of Congress.

Mr. TAKANO. Just help me clarify. Is the Department appealing the decision? Is the decision on appeal now?

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Well, currently I am limited in what I can say as it is in litigation.

Mr. TAKANO. Okay. Well, you cannot tell me whether you are planning to file an appeal or not file an appeal?

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. I will continue to work with the stakeholders who are involved as we move through that process.

Mr. TAKANO. Well, can you tell me this, are you committed to defending the authority, the statutory authority you have to set overtime pay thresholds?

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Well, I have been working diligently with my agency heads, and there has been no decision made on appealing that.

Mr. TAKANO. Okay, that is—I wish there would be more, but I respect that. As you know the Wage and Hour Division is responsible for enforcing the minimum wage, and overtime requirements and protections for children from being exploited by their workplace, in the workplace. Do you know what the current Federal minimum wage is, what that is set at?

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Yes, 7.25.

Mr. TAKANO. \$7.25, yes. Do you think that is enough to keep a full-time worker out of poverty?

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Well, I think it was mentioned in my hearing when I was under nomination. It is not up to the Department of Labor Secretary to determine Federal minimum wage. That is a congressional issue, and I will enforce all of the laws. I do think many states have determined what is the best fit for their respective states.

I would look to Congress, if this is something that you all want to look at, I would give you the technical assistance to have this conversation, bring forth legislation, and then I would enforce that law. I cannot sit here now as the Department of Labor Secretary and say what should be done that Congress has the authority to do.

Mr. TAKANO. You are not going to give me your opinion on it, but I will say I think most people would say that that is not enough to cover basic expenses like—

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. That is why different states have been—have determined what works best in their communities. Even in certain states like Oregon, what is in Portland is not the same as what is in Granites Pass, so everybody will determine that one size fits all does not work, but I do encourage Congress to take a look at this often.

Mr. TAKANO. Okay, okay. Can we move on. Well, I got your pledge to work with Congress on—

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Absolutely, that is my job.

Mr. TAKANO. Madam Secretary, do you think wage theft is a problem in our country. Is there a problem with wage theft?

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Oh, I think that there have been issues of wage theft in the past.

Mr. TAKANO. Okay. Do you think there is currently a problem?

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. I think people deserve—American workers deserve their right to the wages that they have earned.

Mr. TAKANO. Well, I will just say wage theft continues, I believe, to be a pervasive problem that impacts millions of workers. Recent estimates show that workers throughout the U.S. are experiencing a 15 billion dollars annually from minimum wage violations alone.

However, the Trump administration's proposed budget would reduce full-time employees at the Wage and Hour Division to 1,160

in Fiscal Year 26, a 19 percent reduction from the 1,435 full-time employees in Fiscal Year 24. How will fewer full-time Wage and Hour Division employees improve wage theft protections for workers?

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Well again, the mission of the Department of Labor is to protect the American worker first, and certainly protect their wages, and the benefits that they have earned. Statutorily, we will follow the law, and I am 100 percent confident that the Department of Labor will continue to enforce when a law has been broken, and that will be inclusive of what is in the budget and the preliminary budget.

I cannot speak to what the full budget will be, but I will look to Congress for appropriations on that, and we will fully enforce the law that is before me, and we will have the dollars to do so.

Mr. TAKANO. Well, thank you Madam Secretary, I hope that with the reduced workforce you will be able to fulfill that commitment. I have my doubts, but thank you for being here today and answering my questions.

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Thank you, Congressman.

Chairman WALBERG. The gentleman's time is expired. I now recognize the gentlelady from Illinois, Ms. Miller.

Mrs. MILLER. Good morning, Secretary Chavez-DeRemer, and welcome back to the House.

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Thank you, Congresswoman.

Mrs. MILLER. The Biden-Harris Department of Labor issued a nightmare scenario of regulations that were especially hard on small businesses and independent contractors. Among the pile of disastrous rules was the infamous Heat Standard, as well as the Worker Walkaround Rule.

As if that was not enough, Democrats wanted to further burden independent contractors with more regulations to stifle economic growth and job opportunities. For all the grief that Democrats have given the Trump administration over cutting waste, fraud and abuse, we did not hear one word from them when thousands of healthcare workers, government employees, and military personnel were fired for refusing to take the COVID-19 vaccine.

Most shockingly, Biden's Secretary of Labor never actually was Secretary of Labor. She was so radical she could not get confirmed by the Democrat controlled Senate, and yet she oversaw the Department of Labor for nearly 2 years. Furthermore, OSHA strayed far from their mission, opting to persecute small businesses, rather than secure workers' safety.

Small businesses and independent contractors are at the heart of the American economy, and thankfully, President Trump is back in office to stop the insanity of the last 4 years. In 2021, the Biden-Harris administration issued an executive order to require employees to get vaccinated for COVID-19 or lose their jobs.

As a result of this, and similar State mandates, thousands of Federal workers and military personnel were fired for refusing to take the COVID-19 vaccine. Is there anything the Department of Labor can do to correct this gross injustice, and especially to ensure that it never happens again?

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Thank you, Congresswoman, for all of those thoughts on protecting the American worker first. Working

for the Trump administration, we are in line with protecting the American worker. I talked to the President on this issue in regards to we will always put the American worker at the pinnacle and keep them safe.

We want to make sure that we are growing our economy, and that we are developing and expanding the workforce, and we want to protect them at all costs. I will look to Congress for any congressional review that they would like to do, but it is my job again, as the Labor Secretary, so that we are enforcing the law, and protecting the American workers as we go through either side of regulation or rulemaking and throughout this process.

Mrs. MILLER. Does that mean that our workers are not going to be forced to take experimental vaccines in the future, or lose their jobs?

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Yes. No. I appreciate there are no vaccine mandates under this administration.

Mrs. MILLER. Thank you. If made final in its current form, the proposed Biden-Harris Heat Standard would negatively impact many businesses, both medium and small. Most importantly, this rule would significantly impact the agriculture industry, in my district and across the Nation.

Does the Department of Labor intend to abandon the proposed Biden-Harris Heat Standard?

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Thank you again, and regarding the standards of the Occupational Safety, ensuring the rules are prioritizing what is best for the marketplace and the one size fits all. I cannot comment on the specifics as it is currently in active rulemaking.

We have to follow the Administrative Procedures Act, and so that is—we have to wait for all stakeholders to weigh in before I can talk about it at this time. What I will say though is that we do value the rulemaking process, and as OSHA continues to analyze the transcripts and we come forward, I am glad to report back out to the Committee on where we are in this process.

Mrs. MILLER. Thank you, and I expect that we will have reasonable regulations, and—

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Common sense regulations is the key to growing the economy. I do not think that that should surprise anybody here. At the Department of Labor one of my goals ultimately is to always again, make sure that our workers are safe, and that they do get home safe, but compliance is as well. We work with our American companies and our businesses, that is the No. 1 goal is that we help, and not be an adversary from the Federal level, but to be an ally for our businesses.

That is America first policy is what this administration would like to see. If we are going to grow our workforce we have to be amenable and work with our local businesses on the ground to understand what those market demands are, and then assist them in the compliance of doing so, and at the same time keep our American workers safe first.

Mrs. MILLER. Thank you. I think it will help our Nation thrive and our communities. OSHA went well beyond its original mission during the Biden-Harris administration, persecuting small businesses instead of ensuring worker safety. I trust that OSHA is

changing its approach when working as a safety partner. I think that is what you assured.

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. This compliance component I think is key, and you know, just not weaponizing at all when we are in the enforcement section of the Department of Labor. We want to make sure that our businesses understand what the laws are, they follow the law, and how we can assist them in those compliance efforts.

We are doing that throughout all of our agencies, through those opinion letters, through our websites, through our education systems that we can educate our—you know, listen, our businesses, first and foremost, they're the front line to protecting the American worker.

I can tell you this, when I moved throughout the country they want to do the right thing. They are trying to do the right thing, and it is my job as Department of Labor, and through all of the sub-agencies is to assist them in doing the right thing. If then knowingly they choose not to, well that's when the enforcement can happen.

Chairman WALBERG. I thank the Secretary and I think the gentlelady whose time has expired, and folks, let us start not asking the question in the last 10 seconds.

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. I will not answer any more after.

Chairman WALBERG. My patience is going to wane here pretty soon, so I now recognize the gentlelady from North Carolina, Ms. Adams.

Ms. ADAMS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you Madam Secretary for being here.

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Of course.

Ms. ADAMS. I have seen an increase of about 88 percent in illegal employment of children since 2019. Child labor rules are enforced by the Wage and Hour Division, which is already understaffed. There is one investigator for every 278,000 workers, and this is a crisis that would make it—which would be much, much worse under this proposed budget.

The chart on page 24 of the budget shows 1,160 full-time employees, a cut of 153 staff, and on page 25 it proposes 906 full-time employees, or a cut of 407 staff. Which is it? Is it 1,160 or is it 906 because there are disparities and differences on each of those pages.

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Thank you, Congresswoman. I would have to take a look. I see it here in front of me, but in order for me to answer it correctly I will look to my team, and make sure that we have those. Fiscal year 2026 is showing a 906 FTEs reflects the program decrease of 25 million from Fiscal Year 2025 is what I am seeing.

Ms. ADAMS. Okay.

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. In front of me, so, but I will clarify that for the record to make sure that you have it.

Ms. ADAMS. All right. I appreciate it. In terms of these staff cuts, will they reduce the number of investigations of child labor?

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Thank you again. The goal of the Department of Labor in the Wage and Hour Division is to compliance and enforcement. Absolutely, we want to streamline and mod-

ernize and save. Again, as I mentioned on the outset, and I think the Ranking Member said it best, is not more dollars necessarily completes the job.

I will work with my agency heads to make sure that we are protecting all divisions of the Wage and Hour and complying with the law set forth, and we will be able to do that once the budget is finalized.

Ms. ADAMS. Okay. A yes or no, will these staff cuts result in fewer child labor investigations?

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Again, Congresswoman, determining a hypothetical, we will enforce the law, and we will never allow in this Department, to—I am sorry, Congressman, I was not trying to look over you, I was trying to—we want to make sure that we are combatting all child labor violation. It is not acceptable in this country that we would ever allow for that.

I will do everything in my effort to protect against child labor.

Ms. ADAMS. Okay. I agree that the Department of Labor needs to focus on child labor, but we can also protect adults from wage theft, and we could protect children from illegal exploitation. This budget request, and you said you can go back and take a look it does not really do either of those things.

Let me ask you if there is any research that you have regarding the prevalence of child labor violations that will guide the enforcement strategies that you are going to use?

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Oh, absolutely. I am sure I will be working diligently with the professionals of the Department of Labor to make sure that we have all the information needed to enforce the laws that are in place and protect against child labor.

Ms. ADAMS. We are looking at a cut in this agency by 25 million dollars, which is—and a significant number of staff, and I just do not believe that neither of those things are really going to offer compliance assistance, either that we are going to remain—these folks are going to remain inspectors, inter-compliance assistance specialists, or they are not going to be doing investigations.

I have a real concern about that. Would that be the case you think?

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Well, I look forward to working with Congress through the appropriations process in order to determine the funding source, in order for me to comply with the law. The Department of Labor will continue to always enforce the laws on the books and protect the American worker and against child labor.

Ms. ADAMS. Let me move on. I want to abide by what the Chairman has asked us to do. In January, the Department of Labor released a training and employment notice to eliminate Federal funding for workforce development programs, thought to include diversity, equity, and inclusion, and because of that notice Rutgers Center for Minority Serving Institutions canceled its HBCU and registered apprenticeship mini-conference, and while this notice was rescinded in February, no replacement has been issued.

I am not really optimistic about how future notices might affect HBCUs, and I do worry that the chaos in the Department of Labor created in January might have a negative effect on future invest-

ments and workforce development at HBCUs, can you comment on that?

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Well, I do not know if I have a specific comment on specifically that, but what I can assure you is that the Department of Labor on Workforce Investments is the No. 1 goal to educate and train the workforce in this country.

I will continue to work with your office and many others to address the issues that you are concerned about. I will report out to this Committee often, when asked, Chairman, in order to update you on the specifics once we move through this.

Ms. ADAMS. Thank you very much, and I hope that the future training employment notices will not adversely affect them. Mr. Chairman, I am out of time, I will send my other questions to you, Madam Secretary.

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Thank you, Congresswoman.

Ms. ADAMS. Thank you, I yield back.

Chairman WALBERG. I thank the gentlelady. I recognize now the gentleman from Guam, Mr. Moylan.

Mr. MOYLAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Secretary, I appreciate your presence. I like to see my classmate there in the 118th Congress and congratulations, you are doing wonderful.

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Thank you, thank you, Congressman.

Mr. MOYLAN. Let us talk about the Defense Base Act, DBA. It creates undue financial burdens on American citizens doing business with the Department of Defense on Guam. Their high cost of doing business on Guam, the shipping cost, labor costs, and all, and this is one other thing that adds to this cost.

DBA requirements add about 25 percent to operational costs and unnecessary red tape, effectively blocking off small businesses from defense contracts. We have a lot of small businesses in Guam too, and it makes it quite difficult. Historically, DOL exempt Guam from the DBA requirements up until 2020, when only non-citizens were exempt.

Madam Secretary, do you believe Guam should be exempt from DBA just like the 50 states and D.C.?

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Yes, thank you Congressman. I am honored to be here, and I miss you guys. Thank you so much again for the question. Thank you for the call. I know we discussed this in detail, and this is a big concern for Guam. I know that my staff has connected with your team on this issue, on this legislation, on the Defense Base Act, and I do appreciate that you raise it with me.

I promise you that I will commit to looking into this in order to assist Guam in having the most robust economic development that they can.

Mr. MOYLAN. I would appreciate that, and that would certainly help our military buildup on Guam.

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Absolutely.

Mr. MOYLAN. Thank you. Next question is, Guam is trying to expand its apprenticeship programs into new sectors, namely those related to emergency technology and telecommunications. Without additional public financing, what strategies does DOL plan to pursue to ensure the remote and underserved communities, like

Guam, are equipped with the skills necessary to participate in America's growing tech economy?

Secretary Chavez-DeRemer. Well, as you very well know, and have heard most recently, the executive order by the President is 1 million apprentices throughout this country. We sit at around 700,000 give or take 20,000. We have added about 83,000 since January 20th, since the President taking office, so it is my goal to be focused on respective states in order to enhance their apprenticeship program, especially in the tech sector.

We have seen the pathways to the middle class, careers as apprentices can have an average annual salary of about \$80,000 if we invest. It has been my focus through this executive order, high-paid skilled trade jobs, that is going to be key I believe, for Guam and many other states.

Through the Make American Skilled Again grant funding, 10 percent of those expenditures have to be toward apprenticeship activity. I think if we address all of those in a very succinct order, and work hard, because it is going to take hard work, we will get more business investments in the apprenticeship programs within the local communities, so we can get those young people into the pipeline and address the economic market demands like you have in Guam.

Mr. MOYLAN. I would appreciate that, and that will keep a lot of our workers on Guam, and we need our skilled workers to remain on Guam.

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. That is right.

Mr. MOYLAN. Finally, how does DOL aligning its apprenticeship investment programs to meet the goals outlined in the President's executive order restoring America's maritime dominance?

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Yes.

Mr. MOYLAN. How can the Federal Government partner with Guam to rebuild America's maritime industries, including ship repair?

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Well, you have seen that in the executive order with ship making, again with apprentices. What the President is doing with the onshoring and reinvestments of tens of trillions of dollars is to address this sector, the manufacturing sector that we have seen decimated, really over the last 20 years, where we have seen millions of manufacturing jobs lost.

It is a dedication from the Department of Labor that we assist the President in doing so, and building that apprenticeship program, as well as addressing not only ship building, but many other maritime and other sectors for national security as well, so again, we will be working with every State, every Congressman in order to address those, and you will see me in Guam.

Mr. MOYLAN. I am glad to hear that. Then of course our strategic location, Guam, the maritime and ship repair will be very important for our Nation to have that so forward in the INDOPAYCOM region, so again, I am looking forward to your visit to Guam. We will be sure to take you around and you can understand our territory. Thank you so much, Madam Secretary.

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Thank you.

Mr. MOYLAN. Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Chairman WALBERG. I thank the gentleman for his excellent example of efficient questioning and timekeeping. Now I recognize the gentleman from California, Mr. DeSaulnier.

Mr. DESAULNIER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I have a question for my last 5 seconds, so I will save that. Madam Secretary, thank you so much for reaching out. I enjoyed our conversation yesterday. It was nice to find out that we were both fellow Teamsters, former Teamsters and small business owners.

Two subjects that we talked about, three actually yesterday, that I hope you remember. First, the work that we are doing for multiple sessions now on the Health Employment Labor and Pension Subcommittee, which I am Ranking Member with Mr. Allen, to deal with abuses in employer-based health insurance.

Half of the American population, roughly has that health insurance, and through multiple hearings and multiple sessions we have seen that some providers are denying legally required claims from doctors and physicians that historically have been accepted with not a lot of remedy unless the Department of Labor oversees the laws, so look forward to working with you in a bipartisan way to help employer and employees get what they paid for contractually.

Then behavioral health, which is a passion of mine, having been a survivor of a family suicide and addiction, and all of the remarkable treatments in my lifetime we have been able to come up with, would help people like my dad get the treatment they deserve to live full lives, and he was a treatment counselor. He had a master's degree when he took his life.

In regards to that, I am discouraged by some of the proposals from the Department and the administration. Last month the administration announced that the Department of Labor will no longer enforce the 2024 Mental Health Parity final rule, which prevents health insurance policies from imposing stricter limitations on mental health and substance abuse disorder benefits than those on medical benefits.

The President's 2026 budget for DOL cuts Employee Benefits Security Administration, EBSA, funding while allowing bipartisan funding from the No Surprises Act to expire. In addition, the DOL's budget, EBSA would have just 640 full-time employees to oversee 14 trillion dollars of plan assets held by four million employee benefit plans covering over 150 million Americans.

This is down from 1,000 staff in 2012, when the agency's mission was much smaller than it is today. Madam Secretary, have you done analysis of what these cuts will do to the delivery of services to these Americans, almost half the population that are legally to benefit from these under bipartisan law?

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Yes, thank you Congressman, and again for the conversation. While this is the preliminary budget of the President, I will be looking to work with Congress and you know, ultimately Congress will determine the appropriations and what the final budget is.

We want to make sure that we are again saving the American taxpayers' dollars that are used efficiently, and that we modernize some of the current laws. Again, a lot of the executive orders, and I think the one that you mentioned, Executive Order 14219 in re-

gards to rolling back rules that impose undue burdens without clear statutory backing.

I will work with Congress statutorily. If that is something you want to work with, then I will gladly work with your office and many others on the technical assistance for that. Other than, understanding that we want to make sure that we are saving the American taxpayers and no undue burdens are done in addressing the issues that you are concerned about, and many others are as well.

Mr. DESAULNIER. It is important to the economy and to the employer, having their valued employees be able to get back to work whether it is a medical situation, or a behavioral health one, benefits everybody, particularly the economy, and it obviously foremost is the employee and their families.

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Well, again, the Department of Labor's goal is to have a higher labor participation workforce, and oftentimes there are incidences where people leave the workforce, and we want them to come back. We want to assure that they are able to do so, and we will do that in compliance with the Department.

Mr. DESAULNIER. I know you know that as I do, as a small business employer. I would like to discuss another area. I am about to introduce a bill to ensure that the principle of behavioral health parity extends not just to health insurance, but also disability insurance. The experts on ERISA Advisory Council made this recommendation, it has been supported by a number of companies, including Sunlife, a leading provider of disability insurance.

Mr. Chairman, I ask unanimous consent to enter into the record a statement from Sunlife in support of extending parity to disability benefits.

Chairman WALBERG. Without objection.

[The information of Mr. DeSaulnier follows:]

Statement from Sun Life U.S. President, Dan Fishbein, M.D., on the ERISA Advisory Council's recommendation to Congress

WELLESLEY, Mass., Dec. 12, 2023 /PRNewswire/ -- Today, Dan Fishbein, M.D., president of Sun Life U.S., released the following statement regarding the ERISA Advisory Council's recommendation that Congress pass legislation to require mental health parity in long-term disability insurance.

"Mental health is health, unequivocally. Just as with physical conditions, mental health conditions can render a person unable to work. Disability insurance offers a level of income protection when someone cannot work due to illness or injury – but by tradition in the U.S. has typically only covered mental health conditions for two years, depending on the policy. The ERISA Advisory Council today has recommended that Congress pass legislation to ensure mental health parity in disability insurance, which is already the case for health insurance. As one of North America's largest disability insurers, we support this important change. Mental health conditions should be covered by long-term disability in the same way that physical conditions are. We encourage Congress to take up and pass appropriate legislation to make this happen.

The obvious question is why disability insurers don't just do this on their own. Any one company introducing this approach without a market-wide solution would immediately be uncompetitive. A legislative solution is therefore the best option, ensuring an equitable approach for all covered workers, while supporting a strong and sustainable market for disability insurance.

Another key issue is the cost impact. While some have expressed concerns that employers won't be able to afford the added cost of full mental health coverage and will stop offering disability insurance to their employees as a result, we don't believe this will be the case. Employers rightly recognize disability insurance as a valuable employee benefit that workers expect and rely on. If all disability carriers provided mental health parity, the additional cost would be relatively modest. Plus, disability insurers bring significant resources to manage the cost, especially by helping people get back to health and back to work.

There is a mental health crisis in America. Benefits designed 75 years ago and continued as a market tradition do not reflect today's reality. We encourage others to join us in supporting efforts to evolve disability coverage to meet the current needs of American workers. We must do the right thing and ensure we are covering the conditions that need to be covered, so that workers can get the support and assistance they need. Getting people back to health and back to work whenever possible remains the goal, and providing good mental health benefits to bridge people through times when they can't work is a good investment.

We applaud the ERISA Advisory Council's recommendation and stand ready to work with members of Congress and other partners to support appropriate legislation. Society benefits by helping more workers get the mental healthcare they need, and Congress and the industry have the opportunity to do just that."

Mr. DESAULNIER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Madam Secretary, will you commit to working with me and our colleagues on the Committee to implement the ERISA Advisory Council's recommendation to improve disability insurance for people with behavioral health conditions?

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Absolutely. I will work with your office.

Mr. DESAULNIER. Darn, that was my 5 second question and you answered it succinctly. I yield back by 1 second.

Chairman WALBERG. I thank you for your excellent example, the gentleman.

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Thank you, Congressman.

Chairman WALBERG. Now I recognize the gentleman from North Carolina, Mr. Harris.

Mr. HARRIS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you Madam Secretary for your presence here today.

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Of course.

Mr. HARRIS. Well, listen, we want to thank you also for your leadership that you are bringing to the administration. In fact, the Trump administration's pro-worker and pro-business policies are already delivering benefits across the country.

In my home State of North Carolina just this week, Amazon made an announcement that they are making a 10-billion-dollar investment in Richmond County, which is right in the heart of my district, that will lead to thousands of construction jobs, and as many as 500 skilled job when their data center is complete. As you know, getting the jobs is only half the battle. We have to make sure workforce is ready to be hired when the dust settles.

I agree that apprenticeships are a key way to get Americans in jobs, and was pleased to read in your testimony about the ways to expand opportunities to achieve President Trump's goal of over 1 million new active apprentices across the country.

I guess my question is does the Department of Labor have plans to examine the registered apprenticeship program to look for any ways to reduce the bureaucracy that involved industry, or provide multiple pathways for quality programs to emerge?

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Well, again, thank you for that. You addressing the apprenticeship program, and it is somewhat of its an entirety because you know oftentimes, we say something, and then we have to implement it. It is at the direction of the President that we do have one million apprentices in this pipeline to grow this economy, to assist those businesses who are onshoring or investing.

As you mentioned, investing in your home State, they are expecting that workforce to be right there. It is my responsibility to work with private businesses and the public sector as well, to develop that apprenticeship program to a million. As I have toured throughout the country we are seeing—again, I mentioned 83,000 since the President has been online, and since January 20th.

One of the new apprenticeship programs that was just developed was with the International Association of Firefighters. It is something that has not been done before. We are assisting them in compliance, and how to do that streamlining, the actual mitigation of the systems at Department of Labor, so people want to engage.

They want to register their apprentices. We are seeing that the public private sector work together, we are seeing that in our community college campuses. We are seeing it at the Centers of Excellence. Private companies are investing in that workforce, and sponsoring them, so that they have that secured pipeline for investments like in your home State.

When we pair those two together, I could almost guarantee, and mark my words, Chairman, I would like to get over 1 million apprentices in this first year.

Mr. HARRIS. Awesome. Can you anticipate any help you might need from Congress in order to achieve that goal?

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Absolutely, I believe every time Congress comes up with good, bipartisan policy it helps all of our agencies to further develop the workforce. It is the goal of this administration to streamline and modernize some of the Federal bureaucracy and the red tape in the systems that have been in place for far too long.

As a former Mayor, I often used to think if we could just alleviate some of the red tape without harming the American worker, I think that that is going to be key. It is really an honor to kind of take a holistic approach to, how do we protect the American worker, and how do we protect the American business?

One of the reasons that the President chose me was to bring those two to the table together, so that we can grow the economy as a whole, make the pie a little bit bigger, and live the American dream again, and that is what we are doing every single day.

Mr. HARRIS. Excellent.

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. I look to Congress for good policy that I can enforce in order to grow the workforce.

Mr. HARRIS. Excellent. Well, in my last minute or so, let me ask this, and it really ties in with what Congressman Wilson had talked about earlier. The Biden-Harris Department of Labor's H-2A Worker Protection Rule has been preliminarily enjoined by three separate District Court decisions, finding likely calls for unlawfulness in multiple aspects of this expansive rulemaking.

Rather than halt implementation of the rule until these Court proceedings run their course, DOL continues to implement a confusing patchwork of regulations. The rule should, at the very least, be halted, or more appropriately, rolled back completely. I guess I am going to ask, is DOL reviewing this rule, and what are your plans to provide this certainty?

In my district I have a lot of ranchers, a lot of farmers that are very interested in this, and they love the H-2A program.

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. That is right.

Mr. HARRIS. We want to make sure they are concerned about the rising costs obviously.

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Yes. Every time again that there is policy, we want to make sure it is workable, and that it works for the American people. It is my obligation to review all rulemaking

and regulation, and then work with Congress to determine the best outcome of that policy, and then enforce the law. I will continue to work with our stakeholders, and our respective states, including our H-2A visa users to do so.

Mr. HARRIS. Absolutely. Thank you, Madam Secretary. Mr. Chairman, I yield back my time.

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Thank you, Congressman. It is nice to meet you.

Chairman WALBERG. I thank the gentleman. I recognize the gentlelady from Georgia, Ms. McBath.

Mrs. MCBATH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Secretary, thank you so much for being here once again. It is good to see you back in your old Committee room.

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Yes.

Mrs. MCBATH. As a mother, I must say I am deeply concerned about child labor. In 2023, a Georgia based contractor was fined at both the Federal and State level for violating overtime, work safety, and child labor laws by employing a 17-year-old to work one of the most dangerous jobs there is when done without the proper precautions, and that is roofing.

He unfortunately fell about 25 feet from a store rooftop and was airlifted to a local hospital. Thank God, he recovered, and recovered without any serious injury, but falling from a roof can have very deadly consequences as you might assume. We are all lucky that his injuries were not worse.

It shows how important enforcement at the Department of Labor really, really is. Your proposed budget will cut the number of investigators at the Wage and Hour Division as well as the Office of the Solicitor, leaving fewer staff and resources to prevent cases like this, and hold those accountable who are putting our kids in danger and at risk.

As you know, my son Jordan was unfortunately taken from me at only the tender age of 17, so I know the pain of losing a child, and yes, I can promise you I miss him every day. Jordan was the exact same age as this young man that I just spoke about, and it would be a tragedy for any family to have to go through what mine has because the Department did not have the resources or the time to stop these accidents before they happened, or to hold the violators accountable.

The Wage and Hour Division today has significantly fewer child labor and wage theft investigators on staff than they did over 75 years ago, 611 today versus 1,000 in the year of 1948, despite our workforce being much larger than it was at that time. Investigators in a dozen states told the New York Times that their understaffed offices could barely respond to the number of complaints, much less open their own investigative—independent investigations because they were understaffed.

How does the Department plan to crack down on child labor and wage theft if there are fewer investigators and resources to protect our kids, and to protect our workers?

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Thank you, Congresswoman. It is an honor to be back and visit with you here today, and I am sorry about Jordan. I do not think I did know that, so.

Mrs. MCBATH. Thank you.

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. From the Department of Labor's perspective, it is my ultimate responsibility and goal to protect those American workers, and especially anybody who is nefariously breaking the law, and anybody who does knowingly break the law, the Department of Labor does have enforcement capabilities, and we will double down on that because I do not believe any American wants to tolerate that.

Now, if we equate that to a budget and say that again, that more money will always solve the problem, I would probably have to disagree there. I think oftentimes we need to modernize and streamline. I think that that is what this budget does.

We will statutorily always investigate and do what is right when we have those complaints, and we will followup on the law. For companies and businesses who need help with compliance, we want to do that first. They are the first line of defense for the American worker, and I will ask them to always comply with the law, and I will assist them in doing so.

If, at that point they knowingly choose not to, we will use the full capabilities of the Department of Labor to enforce that law and double down on that and hold them accountable.

Mrs. MCBATH. Well, thank you. I understand that you may be saying that preventing child labor and supporting workers is important to you.

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Absolutely.

Mrs. MCBATH. Saying that you want to stop something, and then making child labor and wage theft loss more difficult to enforce does not actually accomplish that goal, and actually does just the opposite. Secretary, Georgia is home more than 100,000 Federal workers. They do everything from research at CDC to supporting Robin's Air Force Base, to helping seniors with their social security.

My understanding is that you were not able to answer this question at a recent hearing, but you have had some time since then. Can you tell the American people how many employees the Department of Labor had when you were confirmed, and how many are employed there now?

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Sure. We know that—I want to make sure that I have that for you, so I apologize. Yes, sorry, I had it written down. As of the DRP 2,513 as of the close. I think our 45-day window was Monday of this last week, and that is why that number was fluid, so 2,513 have taken the DRP.

Mrs. MCBATH. Okay, thank you. We urgently need to lift the Federal firing freeze to ensure that there is someone to help our constituents when they need it, so whether it be at the Department of Labor, or any other Federal agency that folks have a home, we need answers, and we need to make sure that they are getting the important information and resources that they desperately need, and I am over time, and I yield back.

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Thank you, Congresswoman, it was nice to see you.

Chairman WALBERG. I thank the gentlelady, and I recognize another member from Georgia, the gentleman from Georgia, Mr. Allen.

Mr. ALLEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I am amazed, you know, I just thank God we have got people from the business world

in this government now because if you are not innovating, and you are not automating, you are out of business. This government for too long has ignored the amazing technology that is available today to do the very things that we are talking about doing and actually do a much better job.

I have seen it in the business world, and it is time for the government to wake up, and the taxpayers would appreciate it too. This Congress I am honored to Chair—that Chair Walberg asked me to serve as Chairman of the HELP Committee, Health, Employment, Labor, and Pensions Subcommittee. There is a lot of work that needs to be done.

With that being said, Madam Secretary, again, thank you for your efforts in modernizing the Department of Labor, but in recent years we have seen a concerning rise in the number of working Americans relying on government healthcare programs like Medicare and Medicaid. One of my top priorities, and Chairman Walberg had brought this up as well, is to expand access to affordable private health coverage for small business, self-employed individuals, and that is why I am proud to cosponsor Chairman Walberg's Association Health Plan Bill.

I have met with Fortune 500 companies, Fortune 500 companies, they self-insure and have reinsurance, and they are reducing cost of healthcare and providing amazing healthcare to their employees. I also believe that extending the same ERISA waivers currently available to union and faith-based health plans to association health plans could empower these groups with greater bargaining power, also while driving down insurance costs for their members.

Would your Department be open to exploring ways to allow association health plans similar flexibility and waivers currently afforded to union and faith-based plans under ERISA?

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Yes, thank you again for the question, and the conversation about this, and I will look to Congress. Again, from the Department of Labor's perspective, it is my responsibility and my job to work with Congress on these technical issues and assist you in understanding that, but it is the goal of this administration to lower healthcare costs, to understand that we want to offer the best programs and the best plans for our American workers.

Yes, I am committed to working with you.

Mr. ALLEN. Good.

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Your office on this piece of legislation.

Mr. ALLEN. Thank you. One of the biggest priorities is as Subcommittee Chair, is ensuring that Americans' hard earned retirement savings should never be jeopardized by politically motivated mismanagement. The Biden-Harris administration revoked the protective Trump administration rules that prohibited investing in retirement plan assets and voting proxies held by plans for the purpose of impacting and advancing more policies at the expense of participant retirement savings.

The Biden-Harris administration also issued replacement rules that allow and even encourage fiduciaries to use other people's retirement savings for woke agendas. Can you explain the importance of ensuring investment fiduciaries invest exclusively for the

purpose of providing benefits, and defraying reasonable expenses under retirement plans?

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Yes, thank you. I think you are referring to ESG.

Mr. ALLEN. Yes.

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. That has been under this administration where we want to make sure that the fiduciaries are working with their investors for the best outcome and risk mitigated investments. The Department of Labor will remain neutral on this, and we just issued as well, that we want fiduciaries to work with their investors, and not weigh in on any woke policies—

Mr. ALLEN. Good, good.

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER [continuing]. Follow that executive order.

Mr. ALLEN. I recently introduced the Protecting Prudent Investment Retirement Savings Act, this legislation seeks to codify that those who manage Americans' retirement savings are under the Employment Retirement Income Security Act, or ERISA, must prioritize maximizing returns for secure retirement, rather than political or social impact using risky EST investors, as you have mentioned.

The Biden-Harris administration, congressional Democrats and states, including California, have consistently demonstrated their hostility to independent contractors who choose to earn income through apps like Uber, Lyft, and DoorDash. What kinds of policy do you support to assist workers who want to earn a living, or some extra money by working as independent contractors?

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Yes, thank you. It is one of the industries that has expanded very rapidly, the gig economy, the platform economy, this administration recognizes how important it is for workers to have that flexibility to build the businesses for themselves.

The rule that you reference is under the Biden administration, is currently under litigation, so I am limited in what I can say, but publicly what I can say is that its consistent that we will offer the guidance that is necessary in clarifying that 2024 rule, and we are also offering the opinion letter program that I mentioned on the onset, in order to guide, oftentimes private sector businesses in how the Department of Labor is looking at it.

Mr. ALLEN. Good, good, great. I am out of time, but thank you for your common-sense approach to solving these issues, and I yield back Mr. Chairman.

Chairman WALBERG. I thank the gentleman. Now I recognize the gentlelady from Connecticut for her 5 minutes of questioning.

Mrs. HAYES. Thank you, and thank you Madam Secretary for being here. I do have to say I feel a little left out. I did not get a call yesterday.

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. It is not yesterday. I have been working on it all week where my office reached out to offices who responded, and then we set up a time to have a call, and there was some offices who did not respond, but listen, I am glad to give you my cell number, as I do always, and you can always give me a call.

Mrs. HAYES. Absolutely. I appreciate that. I do want to just touch on the issue of Job Corps. I know, I am not asking you about the

pending litigation, or the efforts by the Judge to stop the elimination of Job Corps, but as you well know, 45,000 students are enrolled in this program.

High school dropouts, homeless, young adults, young parents, students with learning disabilities, students aging out of foster care, many of which have no home to go to. I heard you say in your opening that you are working with the Department of Education, which is puzzling to me because we had the Secretary here yesterday who said her final mission is to, you know, downsize, and virtually eliminate the Department of Education.

My question is what plans, if any, do you have to protect these students and keep them safe? I heard you talk about different instances, say from violence, homelessness, addiction, you know, all of the things that literally made Job Corps attractive?

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Absolutely. In regards to the Department of Education and working with Secretary McMahon, as well as many of the other Secretaries, it has been one through executive order that we addressed the workforce education system because they are our future workforce. I will work with the other Secretaries—

Mrs. HAYES. I mean specifically this population because—

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Yes.

Mrs. HAYES [continuing]. A lot of the other ones are hypothetical.

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. For sure.

Mrs. HAYES. There was a direct conversation about the elimination of Job Corps. I guess my question is then what, if this, then this, what happens next for these children, or these young people?

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Yes. I want to work with Congress. As I mentioned, we have put a pause. Yes, we did, but I cannot eliminate Job Corps. That is up to Congress to determine what is the best programming and programmatic effects that we can have on our workforce. I know that it is not—it is subject to litigation, therefore I cannot tell you how much I am frustrated by that because I want to be able to work with Congress.

Because of that, I cannot go into any details on this. If there is an exemption, or if there is a halt in this litigation, I am glad to update the office. What I can say is I am confident that, Congresswoman, you have most likely read the report because I can talk about the public report.

Mrs. HAYES. Well, no. I mean I actually do believe that you care deeply about this. I believe that. I guess what I am asking you, and you cannot go into it today is that there is consideration for these young people, that housing, job training, transportation, all of these things because at 17 their life is not over.

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. That is right. They are our future.

Mrs. HAYES. We can put things in place to ensure that that happens.

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. They are our future. I am committed to this population, always have been, for my 30 years of service. I have kids, I understand that. I want the best for these populations because we need the skilled workforce, and they deserve it, and they deserve Congress, and the Department of Labor, and every other agency had to work on this issue.

Specifically, because of this, I cannot go into what is—

Mrs. HAYES. No, I understand. I mean.

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. I appreciate you understanding that, and I am committed.

Mrs. HAYES. Yes, I do not want to spend too much time on this, but just as a reminder, there is no law that keeps you from disclosing information to Congress about pending litigation. I mean all of us are aware of the Privacy Act of 1974. We all have to have people sign privacy release forms when we reach out to them as a Member of Congress.

I do not want to belabor that point and spend too much of my time on that because you made your position clear. I will talk about some data privacy because there has been much concern about DOGE accessing private information, social security, social security numbers, how is that stored? What is that information going to be used for?

I think that is especially concerning for me in light of reporting this weekend that the Trump administration was contracting with Palantir, co-founder of republican mega donor Peter Thiel, to build a data base of private information on American citizens.

In light of that reporting, can you tell us has the Department of Labor shared any information like this with DOGE, and what processes are in place to employ that the private data of U.S. citizens is not subject to being abused by private organizations or corporations like Peter Thiel or Elon Musk?

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Sure. I do not know what you are referencing on this report. I do not know what you are referencing there. For the Department of Labor employees, which is inclusive of government efficiency employees that work for the Department of Labor, they are subject to the same rules and regulations that all Department of Labor employees are, where they are not allowed to share any private information, and they are subject to any of the safety and security of that private information under the Department of Labor regulations, and I will stand by that.

Mrs. HAYES. Thank you. My time has expired, but I will get a copy of that.

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Yes.

Mrs. HAYES. It is a news article for your team so that you can review it at a later date. I yield back.

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Thank you.

Chairman WALBERG. I thank the gentlelady. I now recognize for his 5 minutes of questioning, the gentleman from Indiana, Mr. Messmer.

Mr. MESSMER. Thank you, Chairman, and thank you Secretary for being here today.

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Of course, glad to be here.

Mr. MESSMER. Yes. Appreciate your phone call earlier this week. In my 36 years as a prior business owner of a family business that has spanned for 54 years in the construction industry, in that time dealing with hundreds of employees, we never had an incident where we had an employee deal with a heat related issue on the job.

I cannot believe that my experience is unique, and I question the need for the proposed Heat Rule that was rolled under the Biden administration. It is an onerous, one size fits all program, that fails

to take the impact of geographic variability, exertion levels required on the job, and indoor versus outdoor environments that people work in.

You mentioned earlier on a labor related question from my colleague from South Carolina, that a one size fits all program does not work. In the context of the proposed Heat Rule, he also agreed that a one size fits all program is not workable.

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Absolutely. One size fits all usually is a pretty standard practice that does not always work. Everybody geographically in different parts of the country will address this. What the workforce also, as you mentioned in your company for years and years and years, have not had an incident, and again—

Mr. MESSMER. Under current OSHA rules that require water accessibility to employees at all times, and you deal with the heat, and you let people take breaks.

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. OSHA's goal is to uphold those standards. We want to keep our workers safe. We want to work with our businesses and our companies so that whatever rule-making and litigation comes forward that we are protecting one, the American worker, and the compliance is there, and that we can determine that.

I would look to Congress, but as this is under active rulemaking, I hate to say it again, I cannot have a full detailed discussion with you, but we will continue to work with all the stakeholders, including companies like yourself, and businesses, in order to gather that information, go through those transcripts, and then report back as we move through the rulemaking process in the Department of Labor.

Mr. MESSMER. Well, I appreciate that. As the Department moves forward with their public hearings, will you be able to share that information gathered back to myself and members of the Committee?

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Absolutely.

Mr. MESSMER. Okay. Will you commit to—please commit to working with me as this issue moves forward?

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Absolutely.

Mr. MESSMER. Okay, thank you.

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Thank you.

Mr. MESSMER. I yield my time back.

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Thank you.

Chairman WALBERG. I thank the gentleman. I recognize the gentleman from New York, Mr. Mannion, for your 5 minutes of questioning.

Mr. MANNION. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Secretary, Madam Secretary, for joining us today, and appreciate the opportunity to hear from you about the changes occurring at the Department of Labor as well as your budget request for Fiscal Year 1926.

Under this administration the country, meaning many of our small business owners and our workers, have faced significant economic uncertainty, and as a result, labor market fluctuations, chaotic trade policy, mass lay-offs, anti-union efforts, and abrupt terminations of important Federal funded programs have negatively impacted nearly all communities and industries.

In your budget request, if enacted by Congress could add to this economic distress. What is troubling is the proposal to consolidate 11 separate workforce programs into a single block grant. These long-standing bipartisan programs are critical for uplifting many groups within my district. We have the highest concentration of childhood poverty in the city of Syracuse and the highest concentration of African American poverty as well.

Lumping the programs together and handing the funding over with seemingly minimal targeting, or accountability mechanisms puts all of these populations at risk of being overlooked and underserved. That said, I do want to acknowledge one component of the budget that I do support, and believe we can work together on, and that is registered apprenticeship programs.

In my work in the New York State Legislature, I more than doubled funding for a program under the Manufacturer's Alliance of Central New York, and what we have seen is the transformations of people's lives as a result of that program.

These programs do offer pathways into high-quality jobs, particularly for individuals without a 4-year degree. Madam Secretary, your budget would require that 10 percent of the new block grant that you are proposing would go toward apprenticeships. That would amount to a 4 percent increase over the existing funding.

As you have mentioned, this administration has stated a goal of 1 million active apprentices, which would be an increase of 50 percent over that number. I appreciate with—and agree with you regarding this bold goal, but if we are going to increase funding by 4 percent, how are we going to increase the apprenticeship programs by 50 percent?

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Well, thank you Congressman, and I know we do not know each other well, and I am sorry we did not get to work together, but I look forward to working with you through this process on the apprenticeship program. It is going to take hard work and investment into our private sector and public sector to grow the apprenticeship program.

It is my responsibility again, to address that workforce development so that everybody can live the American dream. We know that the skilled workforce of today is different than it was from let us just say even five to 10 years ago. The trajectory is changing rapidly.

The modernization of the skilled workforce is changing, and exclusive of many things, such as AI as well. It is my responsibility to assist our market demands in addressing that. I have seen that in the private sector with car companies. I have seen it with our community colleges wanting to answer the call of what is on the ground they are asking for.

With your assistance, I look forward to prioritizing the budget to address that. On the other question that you had asked about, the Make America Skilled Again block grant, through the patchwork of different states, oftentimes the complexity and the mitigation of getting that funding can be somewhat difficult.

This administration, through the budget process goal, is to combine a lot of those grants without duplication in order to save on the duplication of the processes. That should not limit and will not limit the investment that we have in the actual workforce. It is still

up to Congress to determine if that is what they want. This is a preliminary budget. I think it is a more flexible one that we can lean on and work with our respective State partners, so that they can tell me how they want to spend that funding, if it is New York or Oregon, or Indiana, or anywhere else, that is the goal.

It will be up to Congress to determine if that is where they want those appropriated dollars to come from, and I would work with your office in assisting you as well.

Mr. MANNION. Thank you, Madam Secretary. You mentioned our community colleges, we have a fantastic university system in New York State, and we have the largest private investment in the history of this country with Micron coming in, semiconductor chip manufacturing. That was the result of the Chips and Science Program as well as a State piece of legislation called Green Chips, and as I look over your shoulder, I am going to hit 5 seconds right on the dot.

Strengthening community colleges program is one of those proposed eliminations. How are we going to assure that our community colleges can pivot to the extent that they have already done to make sure we have these stacked credentialing programs and other advanced manufacturing programs?

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Well, I am glad to answer that in more detail. I know that our time is up, but I will submit that answer for you, and I will work with the community college and just do that quarter turn, because I think it is just going to take just enough of that in order to address those issues. I have worked with community colleges and trade schools for years as a former Mayor, and I will continue to do so as the Secretary, and answer that question for you.

Chairman WALBERG. I thank the Secretary. Now, I recognize for his 5 minutes of questioning the Vice Chair of this Committee, the gentleman from Utah, Mr. Owens.

Mr. OWENS. Thank you, Mr. Chair. First of all, good seeing you Madam Secretary, and it was an honor to work with you as a colleague. Also, we are excited about the innovation you are going to bring to this Department that you are now leading. By the way, I did get the call with everybody, and I would say that is an indication of the partnership that you understand bipartisanship, and also the hustle, and both are needed right now in your position.

We are facing a tidal wave when it comes down to demands. As was mentioned earlier, 7 million worker deficits, and we have 10 trillion dollars being invested, so we have to truly bring innovation to this process and work together to make this all work. Madam Secretary, President Trump had, and it was some of the stuff you have touched on a little bit, and I am going to allow you to maybe add more comments.

President Trump has made it a goal to reach and surpass the 1 million new active apprenticeships. We know that there are employees across the country—employers across the country that want to be more involved to find a current system very challenging to navigate. What reforms can be made to better facilitate employer engagement, and with the registered apprenticeship program?

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Again, this is the exciting part of this new administration. What President Trump did in the first ad-

ministration, he has kind of doubled down on the second administration that the American worker will come first, and that I will work with all organizations, whether it is organized labor, private business, private sector, we want to entice all companies, private and public to invest in their workforce in order to get to that pipeline of a million apprentices.

I mentioned earlier, and I am not sure, Congressman, if you were here. The International Association of Firefighters, we hosted them at the Department of Labor specifically because they were launching their first apprenticeship program because we know we need the workforce for our firefighters and our first responders and our wildland firefighters as we move through.

I had a conversation with law enforcement. They are considering registering apprenticeships for law enforcement officers, how exciting would that be that our first responders and our law enforcement would step up and want to know that their pipeline is now respected, and they could register with the Department of Labor.

This is not only good for the country, it is good for the public to see that the private sector is investing in the future of this country and protecting that American worker. I will be the conduit, I will bridge that gap. I will fill that table every single time. That is what the President of the United States asked me to do, and that is why I am willing to work across the aisle for the best policy of this country, so that everyone can attain the American dream.

Mr. OWENS. By the way, that is going to be music to the ears of our Utah firefighters for sure. I just met with them recently. We often hear from businesses that there is a disconnect between the educational system and industry, which results in workers unprepared to enter the workforce.

Again, you might have touched on this a little bit earlier, you might want to just dig a little deep, but what steps can the Department take to bridge that gap, and how can Congress help to address this issue?

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Congress does a wonderful job in understanding the issues if they are on the ground. I want to be the storyteller for you as I travel around this country, so that you do navigate the system and make good policy that will withstand the test of time. That is what the President is doing.

He is looking to the future of 100 years out. We are not looking for policies that will be overturned. It is my goal to understand that, you know, no longer is just a 4-year degree what we want to see. We are seeing so often that technical schools, centers of excellence, community colleges, we understand that there are 6-month certificates, 12 months.

Some of these apprentice programs are four and 5 years, but they are producing mortgage paying jobs for their families to protect those families, so that they can determine where they want to live, where they want to invest, where they want to raise their kids. That is the freedom and prosperity that people are looking for, and it is the Department of Labor's honor to actually assist in that, and help Congress determine what that can be.

I hope we continue to work together. I hope as a former colleague you understand that this is an honor to serve at the pleasure of the President, but it is really an honor to serve the American peo-

ple and change the way we have done business for far too long where government has been an adversary, as opposed to an ally, and I want to be an ally for the American worker and the American business.

Mr. OWENS. Thank you. I actually covered my next question, so I am going to be able to give some more time back. I will just say this, your background as a business owner and Mayor, you understand what return on investment is, and that is what we need in government, so thank you for taking on this position, and look forward to working with you.

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Thank you, Congressman.

Mr. OWENS. I yield back.

Chairman WALBERG. I thank the gentleman. Now, for his 5 minutes of questioning, I recognize the gentleman from Texas, Mr. Casar.

Mr. CASAR. Secretary, it is good to see you again.

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Thank you.

Mr. CASAR. The last time we were together we were having fruit plates outside of the Ag Committee.

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. I think so, that is right, I forgot. Thank you for being here. Appreciate it.

Mr. CASAR. Good to see you. Recent research that was published said that about 2,000 American workers are killed every single year because they overheat at work, and thousands of more people get hurt at their workplaces. The Biden administration started a rulemaking process that has been passed along to you under the Trump administration to make sure that workers get a rest break when they are out there working in the heat.

We have talked about how many agriculture workers there are in your community, and my community is one of construction workers, where folks clock into work at 7 in the morning, and during the summertime it might be 90 degrees when you get there at 7 in the morning, and 100 degrees by the time it is time for lunch.

Unsurprising to me was recently in this Committee, sitting in those chairs where you are sitting, we had some big business industry lobbyists who said they were opposed to those rest break rules under the Biden administration. Surprising actually to me, in a good way, was they said that they thought it was wrong for somebody to come in at 7 in the morning in 90 degree heat and work all day without a rest break, all the way up to the lunch break where they have not gotten a rest break for hours in the 90 degree heat.

I understand that you are in the rulemaking process right now, so I am not going to ask specifically about the rule you will put out, but what I do want to ask is would you agree at least with some of those industry folks that were sitting here that it is wrong for if it is 90 degrees, for somebody to start a 7 in the morning and they are working all the way up to lunch, and they have not been given a break between 7 a.m. and noon and it is 90 degrees.

Would you agree that that is wrong and dangerous?

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Well, Congressman, I appreciate the question, and understand that you want my opinion, and as the Secretary of Labor I think it is more important—the bigger question is, is it my responsibility to address the stakeholders, and take

the information as you just mentioned from one side, and it might be wrong, and another side that says, well, wait a minute, we want to comply?

From my perspective, while we are in rulemaking, I will take that information when we are developing that rule because what I do want is to follow the law. We know the one size fits all, I just said it earlier to Congressman Messmer here, and understanding that. I cannot speak specifically to the rules, it is in rulemaking, but I do want Congress to address what is the best policy moving forward to protect the American worker?

One of the things the Department of Labors core missions is to make sure every worker gets home safely. That is where we should always lead from. I want to work with you in technical assistance to develop——

Mr. CASAR. Secretary, great, how about if it is 100 degrees out? In San Antonio last summer——

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Sure.

Mr. CASAR. Almost all summer it was 100 degrees every day. You think that workers should be working in 100-degree heat 5 hours straight without a break during that 5 hours?

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Well, again, I will not give my personal opinion because as the Secretary of Labor I cannot put my thumb on the scale. I know you understand.

Mr. CASAR. I know you are not—I guess my question, and I am not trying to be competitive.

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. In my time in Arizona, I understand there is difference geographically across the Nation.

Mr. CASAR. Totally, and so to be real—like so last summer the heat index in my district hit 117 degrees.

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Understood.

Mr. CASAR. I feel like we should at least be able to say 117 degrees, you are working for hours.

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Right.

Mr. CASAR. You are in charge of workplace safety saying we probably should say that if it is 117 degrees the industry should give workers a break.

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. I hope that is what you are saying to each other, and that you will develop a policy, and I will enforce the law of that policy as the Secretary of Labor.

Mr. CASAR. Okay. I guess what I want to communicate to you, Secretary, is that I hope that we do not allow, and you do not allow, the big business lobby to come here in public and say that actually they are okay with giving—having a requirement for there to be water breaks. Maybe they do not agree specifically with the exact binary requirement, but do not let them come here and say that they are okay with some requirements for rest breaks, and that to have them say that in public.

Then go and in private push for a toothless rule that results in no requirements. I think that that would be really devastating, would put people's lives at risk, and we hear all the time here this thing of well, not one size fits all. Well, let us talk about a specific size.

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Yes.

Mr. CASAR. 90 degree heat, 95 degree heat, employers should be required to do something, and there should be real requirements that I hope just as you committed to meeting with some of my colleagues on the republican side of the aisle, I hope that you can commit to meeting with us as well.

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Absolutely. Always will meet with all Members of Congress for the best policy. That is my responsibility, and it is my honor to do so.

Mr. CASAR. Thank you and I yield back.

Chairman WALBERG. I thank the gentleman. I now recognize the gentleman from California, Mr. Kiley.

Mr. KILEY. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Secretary Chavez-DeRemer, good afternoon.

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Nice to see you, Congressman.

Mr. KILEY. Good to see you as well. Congratulations on your confirmation by the Senate. The last administration seemed to think that Senate confirmation was optional, so it is great to have a legitimate Senate confirmed Secretary of Labor. The fact that the last nominee for your role got bipartisan opposition, whereas you got overwhelming bipartisan support I think is very telling.

It shows that we have a Secretary of Labor who is on the side of American workers. I wanted to ask you about the connection between our K-12 education system and workforce issues, which is of course implicit in the very set up of this Committee. It is the Education and Workforce Committee, which you were once a member of.

In many ways at the level of policy, these two things have been disconnected for a long time. You know, we have kind of got into this mentality that the purpose of our K-12 education system is to prepare students for college, and that everyone should go to college. We are starting to see a little bit of a swing of the pendulum back toward supporting things like career education.

I was actually I had the chance to speak with a group that assembled in my district earlier this week for a workforce summit at our local community college, and they had folks who were leaders in higher education and K-12 education, and major employers from the area thinking about how can we work together to prepare folks for the workforce of the future.

You know, I shared some of my thoughts about what we could do at the level of a Federal policy, but I wanted to give you a chance if you had—were able to speak with them about what your thoughts, and indeed, I hope you could at some point actually on your tour across the country, stop by my district.

What are your thoughts about what we would like to see in our K-12 education system from a workforce perspective?

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Yes. Thank you, Congressman. The whole point of the America at Work tour is to do just that, listen to what is happening on the ground. Then culminating really my experiences as a former Mayor, as a business owner, and as a Congresswoman, and now Secretary to say what is best for the local communities?

If we lead again from the American workers perspective, and the local community perspective, we know we can offer the future workforce through K-12 education, and the future workforce of

America that students will back into these degrees based on market demand.

Listening to the private sector say what they actually need, and then drawing, you know, A to B and say here is how we are going to get you there. Many times I am talking to the 25 to 27 year old who is being reintroduced to the community college, who still is working 40 hours a week, who now then goes to school at night just to gain that extra certificate, so that they can improve on their life for their families.

It is those kinds of stories that I am hearing over and over again that they want the flexibility to earn while they learn, to understand that this is where they—they want to have a choice in their education.

Then as it relates to K through 12 and working again with Secretary McMahon at the Department of Education, we are consistently trying to understand how we are going to invest in that future workforce, and that is going to take investment on the front end of our K through 12 education.

I am looking forward to working with her as we move through this process, and then working with our respective State partners to understand what does California need specifically that is different from Oregon, that is different than Indiana, that is different than Michigan, different than Utah.

As I travel around the country, that is my focus, is talking to the American worker, and understanding exactly what they need, and then coming back to the President of the United States, having him understand that, and as we put those toward our America First policies, then I will look to Congress to pass. This Big Beautiful Bill that needs to be passed so that we can move forward with investing in our future workforce.

Mr. KILEY. I think it is a tremendous approach and a great vision for the future of education and the workforce. Thank you for your leadership, I yield back.

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Thank you, Congressman.

Chairman WALBERG. I thank the gentleman, and before I go to recognize the gentlelady from Arizona, I recognize the gentlelady from Connecticut, Ms. Hayes, for her request.

Ms. HAYES. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just ask unanimous consent to enter the articles I referenced earlier, so that the Secretary can have them. A New York Times Article, "Trump Taps Palantir to compile data on Americans," and a Newsweek article, "Trump Flipped on Us, Maga Reacts to Potential National Citizens Data base." I want to enter them both into the record.

Chairman WALBERG. Without objection, so ordered.

[The information of Ms. Hayes follows:]

6/5/25, 12:30 PM

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6/5/25, 12:30 PM

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By [Nick Mordowanec](#)

Staff Writer



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Supporters of President [Donald Trump](#) expressed anger and disbelief online following reports that his administration had advanced plans to create a national citizen database with technology firm Palantir.

Newsweek reached out to Palantir for comment.

Why It Matters

The White House has contracted Palantir, a Colorado-based analytics company [co-founded by Trump supporter Peter Thiel](#), to assist in [compiling a database of personal information](#) on American citizens, according to unnamed government officials and Palantir employees who spoke with *The New York Times*. The purported deal follows project talks Palantir had with the Social Security Administration (SSA) and the Department of Education.

The reaction from Trump's supporters reflected growing unease within conservative circles, indicating a rare rupture between the president and key segments of his constituency. The controversy underscores nationwide anxieties around privacy, civil liberties, and the growing influence of technology firms over personal information management.

What To Know

<https://www.newsweek.com/donald-trump-palantir-maga-database-surveillance-2079905>

2/16

6/5/25, 12:30 PM

'Trump Flipped On Us': MAGA Reacts to Potential National Citizen Database - Newsweek

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drawing sharp concern from privacy advocates and Trump's own core base, otherwise known as "MAGA." Detractors compared the centralized database effort to surveillance initiatives in authoritarian regimes.

Numerous pro-Trump voices expressed dismay and feelings of betrayal across social media platforms like X.

"People are so quick to suggest that I flipped on Trump...No, no, no...I didn't flip on Trump. TRUMP FLIPPED ON US. I'm just not willing to continue living in a LIE, and I will tell you the unfortunate TRUTH about it," The Patriot Voice wrote on X to his 158,000 followers.



President-elect Donald Trump shakes the hand of Peter Thiel during a meeting with technology executives at Trump Tower, December 14, 2016 in New York City. **DREW ANGERER/GETTY IMAGES**

The Hodgetwins, popular conservatives and Trump supporters, have more than 3.3 million followers on X. In response to *The New York Times* report, they wrote on May 30, "Hope this ain't true y'all."

6/5/25, 12:30 PM

'Trump Flipped On Us': MAGA Reacts to Potential National Citizen Database - Newsweek

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Nick Fuentes, a far-right Trump supporter described as an "America First" white nationalist, called the association between the Trump administration and Palantir "the ultimate betrayal of his own people."

"Feeding every 'MAGA extremist' into an AI database controlled by a CIA/Mossad cutout," Fuentes said on X, where he has roughly 561,000 followers. "Seriously, if Palantir isn't the deep state, then what is?"

In a [video](#) recorded by Fuentes, who also has a Rumble channel viewed over 31 million times, he said the following: "They are tracking everybody that criticized Israel, everybody that interacts with somebody that's criticizing Israel, and whether you're on a visa or not, whether you're a citizen or not, whether you're brown or not, Christian or Muslim, they're putting you in the Palantir database. They're putting you on the enemies list. If you don't see a problem with that..."

"I'm beginning to think it started when DJT walked down that escalator, before 2016," wrote an X user with the moniker "Redneck Common Sense."

X user Jack Maxey wondered: "Was MAGA a giant psyop?"

X user @D10Cat wrote: "Is Trump the same man that he was in 2016? Or did I just not see it back then?"

"The cope is unreal," wrote Ashton Nichols on X. "I voted for Trump but this is just unacceptable."

Palantir secured more than \$113 million in federal contracts since Trump took office, including a recent \$795 million agreement with the Department of Defense, [according to The New Republic](#). Its data analytics platform, Foundry, has already been deployed at the [Department of Homeland Security](#) and Department of Health and Human Services, potentially enabling cross-agency information sharing.

"Shady, centralized dossiers on citizens are foundational for attacking civil rights and civil liberties—but paper files have long been replaced by a mishmash of electronic forms, biometrics, and data bought off data brokers," Cody Venzke, senior policy counsel at the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), told *Newsweek* on Monday. "AI platforms like

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government has on each of us — your political donations, governmental benefits, movements, and perhaps firearm records, could someday be a single click away for dozens of governmental agencies."

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Other critics, including activist Jason Bassler, [compared the plan](#) to China's "Social Credit System," warning of the dangers of centralized personal dossiers.

"No, this Palantir database isn't like the others," Bassler wrote on X on June 1. "It will combine:

- Tax filings
- Student debt
- Social Security
- Bank accounts
- Medical claims
- Immigration status

"No previous database system has ever centralized this much personal info across various federal agencies."

What People Are Saying

Taylor Rogers, White House spokesperson, said in a statement to *Newsweek* on Monday: "President Trump signed an executive order to eliminate information silos and

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Former Republican Representative Justin Amash: "The surveillance state...the police state...the deep state.....are alive & well under Trump. He signed bills to extend & expand mass surveillance. Now he's building profiles' on millions of law-abiding Americans. It's an extraordinary threat to liberty."

Paul Graham, computer scientist, said: "Palantir is 'helping build the infrastructure of the police state.'"

What Happens Next

Palantir has yet to respond to the *Times*' report.

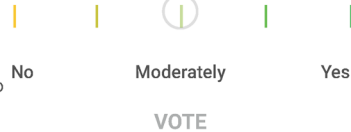
Updated 6/2/25, 4:07 p.m. ET: This story was updated with comment from Venzke.

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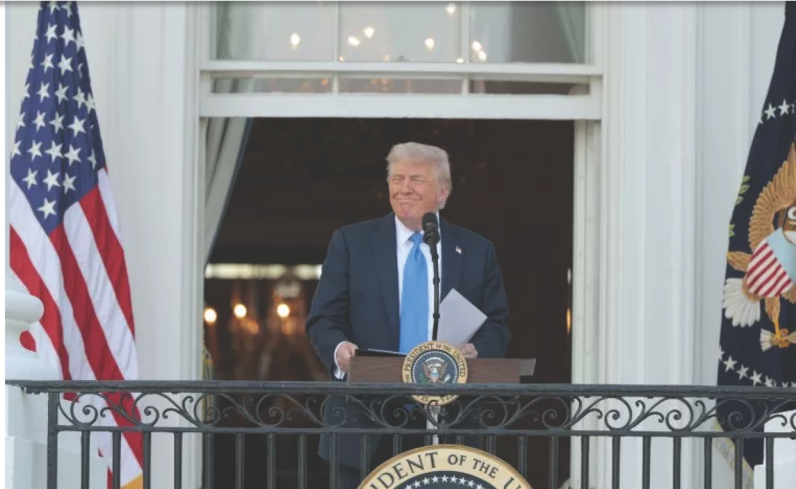
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Nick Mordowanec is a Newsweek investigative reporter based in Michigan. His focus includes U.S. and international politics and policies, immigration, ... [read more](#)

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Trump Taps Palantir to Compile Data on Americans - The New York Times

The Trump administration has expanded Palantir's work with the government, spreading the company's technology — which could easily merge data on Americans — throughout agencies.

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By Sheera Frenkel and Aaron Krolik

Sheera Frenkel reported from Washington and San Francisco, and Aaron Krolik from New York.

May 30, 2025

In March, President Trump signed an executive order calling for the federal government to share data across agencies, raising questions over whether he might compile a master list of personal information on Americans that could give him untold surveillance power.

Mr. Trump has not publicly talked about the effort since. But behind the scenes, officials have quietly put technological building blocks into place to enable his plan. In particular, they have turned to one company: Palantir, the data analysis and technology firm.

The Trump administration has expanded Palantir's work across the federal government in recent months. The company has received more than \$113 million in federal government spending since Mr. Trump took office, according to public records, including additional funds from existing contracts as well as new contracts with the Department of Homeland Security and the Pentagon. (This does not include a \$795 million contract that the Department of Defense awarded the company last week, which has not been spent.)

Representatives of Palantir are also speaking to at least two other agencies — the Social Security Administration and the Internal Revenue Service — about buying its technology, according to six government officials and Palantir employees with knowledge of the discussions.

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The push has put a key Palantir product called Foundry into at least four federal agencies, including D.H.S. and the Health and Human Services Department. Widely adopting Foundry, which organizes and analyzes data, paves the way for Mr. Trump to easily merge information from different agencies, the government officials said.

Creating detailed portraits of Americans based on government data is not just a pipe dream. The Trump administration has already sought access to hundreds of data points on citizens and others through government databases, including their bank account numbers, the amount of their student debt, their medical claims and any disability status.

Mr. Trump could potentially use such information to advance his political agenda by policing immigrants and punishing critics, Democratic lawmakers and critics have said. Privacy advocates, student unions and labor rights organizations have filed lawsuits to block data access, questioning whether the government could weaponize people's personal information.



Migrants apprehended by U.S. agents in November. President Trump could potentially use government data to police immigrants. Paul Ratje for The New York Times

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Palantir's selection as a chief vendor for the project was driven by Elon Musk's Department of Government Efficiency, according to the government officials. At least three DOGE members formerly worked at Palantir, while two others had worked at companies funded by Peter Thiel, an investor and a founder of Palantir.

Some current and former Palantir employees have been unnerved by the work. The company risks becoming the face of Mr. Trump's political agenda, four employees said, and could be vulnerable if data on Americans is breached or hacked. Several tried to distance the company from the efforts, saying any decisions about a merged database of personal information rest with Mr. Trump and not the firm.



Palantir has had federal contracts for years, including for defense work. In 2023, it showed a military vehicle in Las Vegas. Patrick T. Fallon/Agence France-Presse — Getty Images



Palantir worked with the U.S. government on vaccine distribution during the pandemic. Erin Schaff/The New York Times

This month, 13 former employees signed a letter urging Palantir to stop its endeavors with Mr. Trump. Linda Xia, a signee who was a Palantir engineer until last year, said the problem was not with the company's technology but with how the Trump administration intended to use it.

"Data that is collected for one reason should not be repurposed for other uses," Ms. Xia said. "Combining all that data, even with the noblest of intentions, significantly increases the risk of misuse."

Mario Trujillo, a lawyer with the Electronic Frontier Foundation, a digital rights group, said the government typically collected data for good reasons, such as to accurately levy taxes. But “if people can’t trust that the data they are giving the government will be protected, that it will be used for things other than what they gave it for, it will lead to a crisis of trust,” he said.

Palantir declined to comment on its work with the Trump administration and pointed to its blog, which details how the company handles data.

“We act as a data processor, not a data controller,” it said. “Our software and services are used under direction from the organisations that license our products: these organisations define what can and cannot be done with their data; they control the Palantir accounts in which analysis is conducted.”

The White House did not comment on the use of Palantir’s technology and referred to Mr. Trump’s executive order, which said he wanted to “eliminate information silos and streamline data collection across all agencies to increase government efficiency and save hard-earned taxpayer dollars.”

Some details of Palantir’s government contracts and DOGE’s work to compile data were previously reported by Wired and CNN.

Palantir, which was founded in 2003 by Alex Karp and Mr. Thiel and went public in 2020, specializes in finding patterns in data and presenting the information in ways that are easy to process and navigate, such as charts and maps. Its main products include Foundry, a data analytics platform, and Gotham, which helps organize and draw conclusions from data and is tailored for security and defense purposes.

In an interview last year, Mr. Karp, Palantir’s chief executive, said the company’s role was “the finding of hidden things” by sifting through data.

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Palantir's role is "the finding of hidden things" by sifting through data, Mr. Karp has said. Mark Abramson for The New York Times

Palantir has long worked with the federal government. Its government contracts span the Defense Department and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. During the pandemic, the Biden administration signed a contract with Palantir to manage the distribution of vaccines through the C.D.C.

Mr. Trump's election in November boosted Palantir's stock, which has risen more than 140 percent since then. Mr. Karp, who donated to the Democratic Party last year, has welcomed Mr. Trump's win and called Mr. Musk the most "qualified person in the world" to remake the U.S. government.

At the I.R.S., Palantir engineers joined in April to use Foundry to organize data gathered on American taxpayers, two government officials said. Their work began as a way to create a single, searchable database for the I.R.S., but has since expanded, they said. Palantir is in talks for a permanent contract with the I.R.S., they said.

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A Treasury Department representative said that the I.R.S. was updating its systems to serve American taxpayers, and that Palantir was contracted to complete the work with I.R.S. engineers.



At the Internal Revenue Service, Palantir engineers were recently brought in to use Foundry to organize data gathered on American taxpayers, two employees said. Eric Lee/The New York Times

Palantir also recently began helping Immigration and Customs Enforcement's enforcement and removal operations team, according to two Palantir employees and two current and former D.H.S. officials. The work is part of a \$30 million contract that ICE signed with Palantir in April to build a platform to track migrant movements in real time.

Some D.H.S. officials exchanged emails with DOGE officials in February about merging some Social Security information with records kept by immigration officials, according to screenshots of the messages viewed by The New York Times.

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In a statement, Tricia McLaughlin, a D.H.S. spokeswoman, did not address Palantir's new work with the agency and said the company "has had contracts with the federal government for 14 years."

Palantir representatives have also held talks with the Social Security Administration and the Department of Education to use the company's technology to organize the agencies' data, according to two Palantir employees and officials in those agencies.

The Social Security Administration and Education Department did not respond to requests for comment.



Palantir has talked with the Social Security Administration about using the company's technology to organize the agency's data. Adriana Zehbrauskas for The New York Times

The goal of uniting data on Americans has been quietly discussed by Palantir engineers, employees said, adding that they were worried about collecting so much sensitive information in one place. The company's security practices are only as

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Trump Taps Palantir to Compile Data on Americans - The New York Times

good as the people using them, they said. They characterized some DOGE employees as sloppy on security, such as not following protocols in how personal devices were used.

Ms. Xia said Palantir employees were increasingly worried about reputational damage to the company because of its work with the Trump administration. There is growing debate within the company about its federal contracts, she said.

“Current employees are discussing the implications of their work and raising questions internally,” she said, adding that some employees have left after disagreements over the company’s work with the Trump administration.

Last week, a Palantir strategist, Brianna Katherine Martin, posted on LinkedIn that she was departing the company because of its expanded work with ICE.

“For most of my time here, I found the way that Palantir grappled with the weight of our capabilities to be refreshing, transparent and conscionable,” she wrote. “This has changed for me over the past few months. For me, this is a red line I won’t redraw.”

Alexandra Berzon, Hamed Aleaziz and Tara Siegel Bernard contributed reporting.

Sheera Frenkel is a reporter based in the San Francisco Bay Area, covering the ways technology impacts everyday lives with a focus on social media companies, including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, TikTok, YouTube, Telegram and WhatsApp.

A version of this article appears in print on , Section B, Page 1 of the New York edition with the headline: Palantir Tapped to Compile Americans’ Personal Data

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Chairman WALBERG. I recognize the gentlelady from Arizona, Ms. Ansari for her 5 minutes of questioning.

Ms. ANSARI. Thank you for being here, Secretary Chavez-DeRemer. For the past 55 years, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, OSHA, that we have talked about quite a few times today, has worked to assure safe and health working conditions by setting and enforcing standards, and providing training, outreach, education and assistance.

Every day blue collar, hard-working Americans, whether they are building our homes, fixing our streets, picking up our food, deliv-

ering our packages, they rely on OSHA to make sure they have protections, and safety from injury or death in the workplace.

OSHA also protects employees from retaliation when they raise safety concerns. I am wondering, Secretary, if you will commit to protecting workers from employer retaliation when they raise safety concerns, especially in frontline and immigrant heavy industries?

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. It is a core mission of the Department of Labor to first and foremost protect the American worker to make sure they are safe, and that includes any whistleblower complaints, and we will fully enforce the law and work with the agency heads to do so, and I will commit to working with your office.

Ms. ANSARI. Thank you. Secretary Chavez-DeRemer, do you support calls to abolish OSHA, like those from my fellow Arizonan Congressman, Andy Biggs?

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. I do not know any—I cannot reference what the Congressman talked about. I do not know of that comment. OSHA is fundamentally instrumental to the Department of Labor to protect the American worker.

Ms. ANSARI. Okay. President Trump's nominee for OSHA Director is David Keeling. While he was the top safety official at UPS, he was the top reason for injuries, resulting in 20 percent of incidents, and President Trump's own administration cited UPS and sought the maximum penalty.

If confirmed, Mr. Keeling would be in charge of carrying out OSHA's heat safety efforts, and given his history, do you believe Mr. Keeling is qualified to take on this role?

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Mr. Keeling was appointed by—nominated by the President. As he moves his way through the confirmation process, I will look to the Senate on the advice and consent that he will come to the Department of Labor if so confirmed, and then work with him, and I look forward to working with my colleague in the Department of Labor to assist in all of the safety factors that are important to the Department of Labor.

I will always fully enforce the law, and work with my colleagues to do so, do the same.

Ms. ANSARI. I know last year you yourself said, and I quote, “As we face hotter summers and more frequent extreme heat events, our communities need to be able to rely on prompt, Federal assistance to reduce the risk of heat related illnesses and deaths.” Do you still agree with that statement?

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Well, I certainly never want an American worker to be unsafe or hurt. Outside of again, we are talking about this Heat Rule, I cannot speculate.

Ms. ANSARI. It is not about the rule though, do you stand by your statement?

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Well, I certainly want to protect all American workers. That is important to the Department of Labor, and as the Secretary.

Ms. ANSARI. Especially from heat related?

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Of course.

Ms. ANSARI. Okay. Is it true that the Chairman of this Committee sent a letter to you earlier this year to rescind those heat illness and injury rules?

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. I received several letters from the Chairman, as well as other Congressmen. I do not know specific to that statement. I would have to go back and look at what the letter specifically said.

Ms. ANSARI. You do not know whether or not you responded to that letter?

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. I am sure I have responded, but I could not say right now, and I would love to get back with your office to make sure that I am being correct in what I am giving you.

Ms. ANSARI. To me this is incredibly important, just like my colleague from Texas, I represent Phoenix, Arizona. This is an issue that is literally a matter of life or death in Phoenix. Last summer 608 people at least that we can confirm, in Maricopa County died as a result of extreme heat.

This year we already had our first heat related death with more than 63 that are under investigation. When I was on the Phoenix City Council, I also have a background in local government, we led a process and passed a bipartisan heat safety rule, worker protection rule for workers. It was broadly and widely supported, both by labor unions, especially the construction industry and those who work at our airports, as well as the business community.

This is also why yesterday I introduced three bills related to extreme heat. I really, really hope that the rule that is being worked on will be ambitious, and will really consider extreme heat and worker protections. I think it is absolutely shameful to advocate against heat safety measures in the workplace, like some people on this Committee had.

I also have sent you a letter earlier this spring. Mine was requesting an updated timeline for finalizing the Heat Rule and encouraging you to do so. Really, I really implore this because in states like Arizona, the legislature is constantly attacking workers. We are a right-to-work State.

There are not enough protections, and people are dying and will continue to die if we do not have ambitious Federal standards, so thank you.

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Well, thank you. I appreciate it, and I know we have not met, so I look forward to working with your office as well. Thank you.

Chairman WALBERG. The gentlelady's time has expired. I now recognize the gentleman from Missouri, Mr. Onder.

Mr. ONDER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member. Thank you for appearing before the Committee today, and congratulations.

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Thank you.

Mr. ONDER. ERISA establishes a broad pre-emption of State laws relating to employer sponsored health plans, with the exception that states retain the ability to regulate insurance. States may regulate fully insured group health plans, but self-insured plans are not regulated as insurance under State laws because the plan assumes the risk and the liability of the plan.

The plan then often will by the employer, will often then buy reinsurance to protect from excessive claims exposure. ERISA pre-emption allows self-funded plans a uniform set of benefits across State lines. It allows the employers to offer coverage at a more reasonable cost, lower premiums, increased cost sharing.

Some states have passed laws that I believe attack this paradigm of ERISA and of self-insured plans, whether it be recent State laws to regulate pharmacy benefit managers, or laws to restrict reinsurance. Will the Department of Labor under your leadership remain committed to the traditional ERISA self-insurance system that—and ERISA pre-emption that has provided health insurance for so many employers and employees through this country?

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Well, it is certainly important, and thank you for visiting with me as we again did not get to work together, but it is important and incumbent upon the agency and ERISA to work with you and many other offices in order to protect the American worker as they move through this process in their plans together.

I am committed to working with your office on any specifics that you need from me to do so, but it is in compliance with what we are doing now under ERISA, and we will commit to stay that way.

Mr. ONDER. Right. It seems that there are some who believe that all health insurance should be government health insurance, and of course, I think many of us in this room today have most of our lives been covered by employer provided self-insured plans, so I think that is an important part of our healthcare system that we need to protect.

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Yes. One of the things that is often talked about in this Committee is employee healthcare plans, and offering the best plans available, and whether that is through again, associated health plans, taking a look into PBMs as you have mentioned. I know that that was a line of questioning that Dr. Foxx did often in the last cycle.

The goal of the administration is to lower the costs of healthcare and make sure that we are providing that benefit to the employee. Working with private businesses and public, we want to make sure that we are offering the best healthcare plans, and so work, that is your job, and it is my job to then comply with that law.

Mr. ONDER. No. I commend you for that statement. Ensuring quality healthcare, and of course, lowering the cost of healthcare because the United States of course spends more than any other industrialized country for healthcare, and yet we do not always achieve the best outcomes, a major theme of this administration.

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Absolutely.

Mr. ONDER. Likewise, and I think the key to that is to provide more, not fewer options. Another option would be short-term limited duration health insurance. You know, in April 2023, the Department of Health and Human Services, and the Department of Treasury published final rules that—on this issue.

Essentially, the Trump administration had allowed short-term health plans to go for 12 months and then be renewable up to 3 years. The Biden administration reverted to the old Obama era policy of 3 months with only 1 month of renewal. Again, short-term health plans obviously are not for everyone in every situation, but

they do offer flexible coverage in cases, for instance, due to waiting periods, Medicaid determinations, or when an individual cannot afford a plan on the ACA marketplace, which are often very expensive.

Likewise, I believe this is another option. Your thoughts?

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Yes, so again, I think it kind of goes back to what I was just saying about the flexibility and modernization of allowing businesses to be able to provide for their employees, and have that flexibility of what the offering can be.

Again, as we go through rulemaking, the specifics is where I will look to Congress, and/or stakeholders to determine, and then as we move through that process, then be able to make a final determination on that rulemaking, but I cannot really comment as it is in rulemaking, so.

Mr. ONDER. Thank you. I yield back.

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Thank you, Congressman.

Chairman WALBERG. I thank the gentleman. I recognize the gentlelady from Pennsylvania, Ms. Lee.

Ms. LEE. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Job Corps is the largest residential workforce development program for young people in the country. They accept low-income, 16 to 24 year olds, who are disconnected from education and the workforce, and they give them housing and healthcare, educational support, career guidance and skilled job training.

For the young people they serve, Job Corps is transformational, and it leads to good jobs in critical fields like healthcare and manufacturing. Madam Secretary, as you know the Pittsburgh Job Corps is centered in my district, so I cannot understand why you decided to close the center, but given the trajectory of this administration, I cannot say I am surprised.

We have 66 homeless teens and young adults living at our residential center, and your department wanted to kick them back out onto the streets with only a week's notice. It took a Judge's order to stop you. Besides the plain cruelty of these actions, our Job Corps in Pittsburgh was incredibly successful.

The last program year Pittsburgh Job Corps has the highest average student credential attainment rate in the country, 83 percent of our students left with a high-skilled job credential, and 81 percent job placement rate. It is despicable that so many successful Job Corps Centers were closed based on a now discredited DOGE report that is rife with false and extremely misleading data.

I want to spend some time going through why this report is just flat out wrong. Keeping in mind that your team sent this report out last week when DOL announced you are closing our Job Corps Centers. I would like only yes or no questions. Secretary Chavez-DeRemer, my colleague Ms. Bonamici already established that you worked together with DOGE, including in creating the so-called Job Corps transparency report.

In the DOGE report it claims that the average cost per graduate is \$155,000. Yes or no, were you aware of that in 2020, pre-DOGE the Trump administration found Job Corps cost per graduate to be \$57,000, and the cost for enrollee was \$34,000 during the program year in 2017 and 2018?

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Thank you, Congressman. I am sorry that——

Ms. LEE. Just yes, or no.

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER [continuing]. We do not know each other, and that——

Ms. LEE. It is okay, just yes, or no?

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER [continuing]. That you were not here for some of my previous——

Ms. LEE. Secretary, because you were here, I know that you know that we have a really tight time crunch and we want to get in a couple things. I appreciate the pleasantries, but just yes or no, were you aware, and we can talk after.

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Yes, for sure. I do want to be clear that I did not eliminate Job Corps.

Ms. LEE. No. Okay. Yes or no, okay. Reclaiming my time, thank you. To be clear here, the reason for this difference, other than DOGE's ineptitude is enrollment in Job Corps, it was at its maximum level in those programs years, with flat funding and forced COVID-19 shutdowns, enrollment went down, so the cost per student went up, it is basic math.

Madam Secretary, this is just yes or no, are you aware that Job Corps is not a typical job training program? That part of its mission is to provide residential living and healthcare to many of the youth who are homeless or transitioning out from foster care, yes or no?

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Congresswoman——

Ms. LEE. Yes or no.

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Congresswoman, under the temporary restraining order that was issued yesterday——

Ms. LEE. This is a yes or no. Are you saying that you are refusing to answer? We have already established that you are able to answer questions about this, so if you are choosing not to you can say that, but it is yes or no, or I am choosing to ignore your requests, or I am choosing to admit that I do not know the answer, which is also okay.

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Congresswoman, under the TRO——

Ms. LEE. No. You are refusing to answer.

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. I will comply with the law.

Ms. LEE. You are not complying with the law actually. I think there is no legal necessity for you to refuse to answer our questions.

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. The Department of Labor has the delegation to——

Ms. LEE. Thank you. You are admitting that you do not know the answer?

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER [continuing]. Operations at the Job Corps sites.

Ms. LEE. I am reclaiming my time. Respectfully reclaiming my time. You are either going to answer or you are not, but you do not have to waste any more of our time. Knowing Job Corps provides housing for its participants, basic math would dictate that the program is going to cost more per participant than other WIOA programs.

I will answer for you, yes. Those reports also states that the average annual earnings for a graduate with \$16,695, this number was derived by multiplying the median second quarter earnings by four. I do not know you, you are not going to answer whether you are aware that this is a false approach to calculate earnings because that outcome measure does not differentiate someone who got a job in the middle of the quarter, or got a raise later in the quarter.

I will tell you that it is bad math. This means that your DOGE report always undercounts earnings when aggregated at the national level. I will assume you are not aware of that, thank you for answering. If you had relied on the experienced career staff at DOL, instead of the inexperienced DOGE staffers, this error would not have occurred.

A better outcome measure is the average starting wage for a graduate in the program year 2023, the same year the DOGE report is using, which was \$17.13 an hour more than twice the Federal minimum wage. I had more questions, and you successfully did not—were not going to answer them anyways, but I do appreciate your time, and I hope that in the future you will be a bit more transparent. Thank you, I yield back.

Chairman WALBERG. The gentlelady's time is expired.

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Very disrespectful and very rude from a former colleague.

Ms. LEE. No, no, Mr. Chair, her interrupting me repeatedly was disrespectful. She knows that as a former Member of Congress, that our time is precious, and you were allowing her, and allowed her to, so I just wanted to respond to that disrespectful comment because I do not appreciate it.

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Thank you, Chairman.

Chairman WALBERG. The gentlelady's time is expired, and now I recognize the Subcommittee Chairman for Workforce Protections, the gentleman from Pennsylvania as well, Mr. Mackenzie.

Mr. MACKENZIE. Well, thank you Madam Secretary, I appreciate you being here today, and your willingness to answer questions before the Committee. You have been very accessible during your tenure, and we look forward to continuing to work with you.

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Thank you.

Mr. MACKENZIE. One question that I would like to ask relates to labor force participation. It continues to remain below pre-pandemic levels with millions of Americans who are working age dropping out of the workforce during COVID, and not yet having returned.

What specific steps is the Department taking to re-engage these individuals, remove barriers that may be keeping them on the sidelines and get them back into the workforce?

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Well, the goal of the Department of Labor is to be focused on the apprenticeship program through the executive order. One of the things this administration has asked the Department of Labor to do is to be laser focused on developing that throughout the country.

Currently, we sit at about 700,000, sometimes give or take 20,000 apprentices. Since January 20th, and the President taking office, we have had about 83,000 apprentices come online. I think

that that is key and a testament to what this administration is doing with the investments and onshoring of manufacturing and construction jobs, and transportation jobs.

We have seen the numbers go up every single month, so under the Department of Labor, my goal is to be laser focused on getting out on the road. The America at Work tour, which I had mentioned before, and then talking to private businesses and public to invest in their workforce on the frontline in their respective states.

Then we will assist them in that compliance, in registering those apprenticeship programs to grow the entire economy through all sectors.

Mr. MACKENZIE. Well, that is terrific. I know there are a number of barriers that are stopping people from getting back into the workforce. One that I would just like to highlight here is working families, two parent families where both individuals are working, high costs of child care can certainly be a barrier, paid maternity leave is another barrier.

I want to work on those things. We have some different legislative ideas, both on the tax base and policy space that look forward to hopefully being able to work with you to make sure that working families have the best opportunities to provide for their family and be a part of our workforce.

The next thing that I would like to talk about is a very broad topic relating to our American economy and American workforce, but it is artificial intelligence. We have held hearings here at this Committee, and others about the impact that artificial intelligence is going to have, particularly related to the workforce.

I would like to hear your thoughts on what AI means for current workers, for the future economy, and what we should be doing to prepare for the changes that AI is going to bring.

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Again, thank you for addressing that. Again, another executive order by this administration is not only growing the workforce and the apprenticeship program, but in line with artificial intelligence. What we know on the outset is that there are a lot of young American workers who are coming online. This is native to them, and AI is not going away.

It is something that the trajectory of it has changed dramatically. I sit on an artificial intelligence Subcommittee, with Secretary McMahon, and Secretary Wright from the Department of Energy. We just had our first meeting yesterday in regards to that, and how we are going to address the future workforce as AI is really running down the same tracks at the exact same time.

One of the fears oftentimes that I hear is will AI replace my job? One of the things that we never want to at the Department of Labor is displace the American worker. We want to assist the American worker, and I will be working with Congress and looking to them as they develop their policies in order to protect the American worker.

How do we modernize again and streamline some of the systems and efficiencies within the business community? Even at the Department of Labor and understanding what our systems are sometimes archaic, and will AI assist us in that, so we can be more efficient in our budgeting process, or our proposals, or our priorities, and then assist the American worker along the way?

As we move through the apprenticeship program and work with our local community colleges, and our career and technical education schools, AI will be on the forefront, and we have to be dedicated through the executive order that we will be focused in on a lot of the investment programs that we do, we will be leaning in toward the AI, so that we have the trained workforce as we move through the future.

Mr. MACKENZIE. Well, that's terrific. I am glad you are going to be involved in the AI transformation. I think it is a tremendous opportunity. We want to make sure that that is an American opportunity led by the innovators and entrepreneurs and everybody right here in our country, and I think it has the opportunity to make American workers that much more productive.

They are already the best in the world, but I think we can do even better if we harness the power of AI.

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Well, I could not agree with you more because I think that that is really where the urban rural divide will completely go away, because we want to make sure that we are accessing all of the workforce in this AI sector, and that will be through innovation. It will not just be the best and the brightest.

Everybody can have access to it, and we will break down those barriers, so that they can attain the American dream.

Mr. MACKENZIE. Thank you again and I yield back.

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Thank you, Congressman.

Chairman WALBERG. I thank the gentleman. Now, I recognize the gentlelady from Minnesota for 5 minutes of questioning, Ms. Omar.

Ms. OMAR. Thank you, Madam Secretary, for being here with us, and watching the hearing earlier I learned that you are also a former union member.

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. My father was a Teamster.

Ms. OMAR. Okay. All right. I am a former AFSCME member, so. I wanted to talk a little bit about the child labor enforcement. In two appropriations hearings last month you expressed a firm commitment to fighting illegal child labor, at the same time your agency has decimated ILAB, including its work to prevent child labor.

Your budget proposal will weaken a historically under resourced Wage and Hour Division. The nominee to be your solicitor of labor wrote a chapter in Project 2025, which literally calls for the rolling back of child labor laws. Madam Secretary, can you assure this Committee that you will not propose any rollbacks of child labor rules that prevent children from being employed in hazardous occupations?

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. I commit to fighting against all child labor exploitation. Absolutely, in this country we do not want to exploit our children, and I am consistent with putting the American worker first. The budget does streamline ILAB, that is one of the agency heads, or agency departments that protect the American worker, and protect against child labor violations.

The budget provides for about 70 million dollars to ILAB, including 38 million in grant funding while restoring ILAB's emphasis on putting the American worker first.

Ms. OMAR. That is a long way of you saying yes?

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. I will work absolutely to combat all child labor.

Ms. OMAR. Wonderful. Many workers across the country will feel the impacts of your staffing, and funding cuts to WHD and OSHA. As of May 2025, WHD employs just 611 investigators nationwide, this is the lowest number since at least 1973, even though there are nearly ten times as many workers and businesses for them to cover.

Your budget proposal cutting the office by 25 million dollars, with staffing projected to fall. Your budget would also cut OSHA inspectors by over 12 percent, even though currently it will take 185 years to inspect every workplace just once. Madam Secretary, what is the plan to keep workers safe when you are slashing enforcement?

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Yes, no, thank you again. You know, again, one of the overall core missions is to protect the American worker, and that includes in the Wage and Hour Division as well. While we are streamlining and doing some cost saving for the American taxpayer, we will always be in compliance with our statutory requirements.

Ms. OMAR. Madam Secretary, Madam Secretary, if I can just interrupt for 1 second. At one point DOGE was set to close 20 WHD field offices and 11 OSHA offices. If this is happening, how will this protect workers?

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. The offices that we have been—that were originally proposed through GSA, we have worked with to bring them online. I do not think that that is a good use of the compliance issue that we have to protect the American worker. Through the DRP, none of our essential workers, even through Wage and Hour, through OSHA, through MSHA, were able to take those because we know we need those investigators on the ground to protect the American worker, and I advocated for that.

Ms. OMAR. Yes, but having fewer investigators and inspectors will not protect workers from wage theft, misclassification, and dangerous working conditions, so how are you going to operate with less even though we did not even have enough to begin with?

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Well, it depends on what the priorities are from the past administration, but—

Ms. OMAR. Are inspections not priorities?

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. They are priorities to protect American workers.

Ms. OMAR. With less inspectors you cannot do investigations.

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. What we do not want to do is weaponize the use of those funding dollars against—

Ms. OMAR. How is there weaponization if you are—if it is going to take you 187 years to complete inspections, and you are cutting the inspectors that are going to supposed to do those inspections? The math is not mathing.

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Well, statutorily we will protect the American worker. We did not have any of our investigators currently. We are not able to take the DRP in order so that they can be assigned to the job that they are required to—

Ms. OMAR. Are you saying that you are going to hire more investigators to do inspections?

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. What I am saying is we did not allow our statutorily mandated offices that we need essential workers, like our investigators through Wage and Hour, through MSHA and through OSHA, to take the DRP because they are essential to protecting the American worker in these industries.

We can still cost save and do the job that we need to do.

Ms. OMAR. American workers can expect that you will expedite investigations to make sure that we are assuring their safety?

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. American workers can expect that the Department of Labor will protect the American worker, as that is a core mission of the Department of Labor.

Ms. OMAR. I hope you keep that promise. I yield back.

Chairman WALBERG. I thank the gentlelady. I recognize the gentleman from Wisconsin.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Thank you for coming on over here to our humble hearing room.

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Hi, Congressman Grothman, I miss you.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Oh. Let us talk about 14-C, are you familiar with 14-C?

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. I am.

Mr. GROTHMAN. That is the provision regarding giving people with special needs the ability to work for less than minimum wage?

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Yes.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Section 14-C certificates expand employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities, and it is always enjoyable, and one of the things I suggest you do if you have not done it yet, is tour a facility where these 14-C certificates are in use, and which people who maybe otherwise would not be able to find a job at all are given all the benefits of, you know, being able to work themselves.

The Democrats in the Biden administration did not like 14-C. They felt it was taking advantage of somebody to go out and to work for five bucks an hour. I personally am a big fan of 14-C because I have toured so many different facilities, in which these disabled folks are able to develop a little bit of independence, work on their own, the socialization with other people.

The Biden administration tried to introduce a requirement that would make it very, very difficult to use 14-C. Do you have—have you yet developed a view of 14-C, and do you plan on withdrawing the Biden administration rule?

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Well, Congressman, as you know, I cannot comment. It is an active rulemaking now, and you know, developing that process is going to be working with Congress, and absent of any congressional action, as you know many states have taken on their own determination of whether they want to continue with 14-C or not.

This is an important issue to so many Members of Congress, it is really not a partisan issue. I have heard from so many how it is important to them on one end, and not on the other, but I look to the states respectively to determine if that is what they want, but because Department of Labor is in active rulemaking on this, I cannot comment specifically on where we are with that.

Mr. GROTHMAN. I will ask you this. Have you personally toured any of these facilities?

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. I have not Congressman.

Mr. GROTHMAN. I cannot ask you to come to Wisconsin because you would have to come to every State, but would you like it someday if we set up a tour and see a few of them so you see the type of people who lives would be affected, and in some cases I would argue, almost ruined?

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Yes. I would be—I think it would be important to understand.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Absolutely.

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Wisconsin it is.

Mr. GROTHMAN. We will set something up, give you three or four of these things. Next thing that is kind of—hopefully it is not too obscure, there are more—in Wisconsin, we have more than 600 volunteer fire departments, I bet it is even higher than that. That is what it says here.

In February, OSHA issued a proposed rule on the new safety and health standard for emergency response replacing the existing fire brigade standards. One of the goals, I think by the way of the fireman's union is to get rid of volunteer fire departments, which are such a huge part of America.

Actually when I first got involved in politics, in my Assembly district, I had like eight volunteer fire departments and nobody had a full-time fire employee. Given concerns about feasibility and cost, and I would say more than that, just all the wonderful volunteer firemen.

Will the Department commit to revisiting or revising the proposed OSHA Rule to ensure lifesaving emergency services are not undermined by Federal overreach, and really just basically standing up to the firemen's union and saying we do not mind it if local communities want to have volunteer departments?

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Well, I cannot speculate on what the firemen's union thinks about the volunteer firefighters. What I will say is again, while this is in rulemaking, I committed when I took on this job, that I would look at and do an analysis on all rulemaking and regulation.

As we move through that process, I will be able to update you and your office and this Committee, and I can followup with that. We do want our Nation's first responders safe, and that will include all of those first responders.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Great. I did not even know, in your old congressional Districts did you have a lot of volunteer firemen?

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. We do have volunteer fire departments, really throughout the entire country, but yes.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Okay, super. I will say this, President Trump signed Executive Order 14173, which rescinded Executive Order 11246. That was an order from 1965, a horrible, horrible order, that established employment—am I over here?

Chairman WALBERG. Way over. You are going over.

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. I am committed to working with your office and can answer those.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Okay, thank you much.

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Yes.

Chairman WALBERG. I thank the gentleman. Now, I recognize the Ranking Member, the gentleman from Virginia, Mr. Scott.

Mr. SCOTT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Madam Secretary, thank you so much for being with us, and you have heard from many members on both sides who have thanked you for your phone calls. We hope that communication continues. It is my understanding that many of the job training programs have either been eliminated or block granted, but when the aggregate funding is added up it is 1.6 billion dollars less. Is that right?

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Yes. Yes, that is correct.

Mr. SCOTT. Okay.

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. On the proposed budget and I will look for Congress for the ultimate budget.

Mr. SCOTT. Thank you. We have heard a comment about 14-C, most states have actually abandoned 14-C, as you know, in favor of strategies to transform employees to competitive employment. As other states continue to abandon 14-C, will you work with us to help those that need assistance to be able to earn a full minimum wage?

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Yes, I am committed to your office and many others. Again, this is really not a partisan issue, this is really a personal issue to many Members of Congress, so I am committed to working with you on the technical assistance as needed.

Mr. SCOTT. Thank you. Could you tell us the status of OFCCP?

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Yes, through the executive order that will continue to be, and through this budget, will be confirmed that we will enforce all discrimination laws, anti-discrimination laws on the books, and this is duplicative, and it is an executive order that we are following through and will wind down OFCCP. Well, and now it is in litigation, so I guess we will have to see about that.

Mr. SCOTT. Can you tell us the status of the Bureau of Labor Statistics?

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Independent of the Department of Labor, we want to make sure that we are not putting our thumb on the scale there, and they are independent for those numbers, so we want the most accurate data as possible.

Mr. SCOTT. Does that mean they are going to keep the—the 29 U.S.C. has a provision that Bureau of Labor Statistics under the direction of the Secretary of Labor shall, and then it goes on.

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Let us see. I can get you the specifics to that. I do not know if you finished your sentence, what the question was exactly.

Mr. SCOTT. You are answering the question.

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Yes.

Mr. SCOTT. Yes. We need to followup on that.

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Sure.

Mr. SCOTT. MSHA, as you pointed out, closed a number of offices that have been reopened, who decided to close those offices, and what standard was used to reopen them?

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. That was GSA before I was even confirmed. We have worked with them specifically to have them understand the importance statutorily that we need to have that in the Department of Labor, and I think since then 34 offices have

been released, but I can get you the specifics, because actually the fluidity of that happens every single day.

Mr. SCOTT. All of them have not been reopened?

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. I could not give you—it is not all, but I do not know the exact number. I think we are at 34, but I do not know exactly, and I am glad to followup with your office and give you those.

Mr. SCOTT. Are there other agencies on the shutdown list?

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. I do not know specifically which agencies you are referring to.

Mr. SCOTT. Any agencies that have regional offices being shut down by people out of the blue. When you said GSA, that was not under—

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Well, GSA is the one who had determined those leases, but now that that is under, you know, litigation, I cannot really speak to the specifics of that. I do not know of any future shutdowns that you are referring to, unless you ask specifically.

Mr. SCOTT. If you do not—that answers the question.

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Yes, I do not know.

Mr. SCOTT. Okay. Injured Federal employees around the country are receiving emails telling them that hearings that they need to resolve their workers compensation claims are being canceled because the Department has terminated its contract for court reporters needed to transcribe the hearings. Are you aware about that, and if so, who decided to cancel the contracts and why?

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. I am not aware of that, and I can have my team followup with your office.

Mr. SCOTT. Okay. Are you aware of any businesses run by Elon Musk that are under investigation by the Department of Labor?

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. No. I want to give you a specific on this, you do not have it? Okay. I will followup with your office.

Mr. SCOTT. Well, when he was running through the—

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. There was no—I have no specifics on that.

Mr. SCOTT. Okay. I think the answer is actually yes, but if we could follow through on that that would be helpful.

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. If my team has it for me before this ends, I will give it to you.

Mr. SCOTT. Okay. Mr. Chairman, I think the 10 second rule is about to kick in.

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Do not get gaveled out.

Mr. SCOTT. I would like to thank the Secretary for her comments.

Chairman WALBERG. I want to thank the gentleman for his attentiveness to the time. There being no further questioners, let me say thank you, Madam Secretary, for your attentiveness today, for your willingness to be here, and attempting to answer all the questions that you could.

I want to say also, thank you to our full Committee, both sides of the aisle, for their interest in hearing from you and the time they took to put questions together, some challenging, some without answer, potential, but thank you. I want to say thank you also to the audience for your attentiveness as well, and your willingness to undertake listening through this long period of time.

It is important, especially when we hear from a cabinet Secretary on this very important department, so thank you as well to the staff who put this—for both sides of the aisle, put this together, so that I hope it would be helpful for you, Madam Secretary as well.

Secretary CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Well, thank you Chairman, thank you Ranking Member, thank you to my team and certainly thank you to the Committee for the assistance in today's hearing. I look forward to updating the Committee early and often.

Chairman WALBERG. We look forward to that too. I would now like to recognize the Ranking Member for his closing remarks.

Mr. SCOTT. Again, I would like to thank the Secretary for her comments, and particularly for her willingness to communicate with all the members of the Committee. I think that many of them expressed appreciation for those phone calls. We have heard a lot about the funding and how you can do more with less, and we will have to see how that works out.

We have an obligation to our workers to make sure the Department of Labor is doing its job. We will be doing oversight, and we will be looking for additional answers. There were a lot of questions that were asked that the Secretary is committed to get back to us on. I think that is fair, and we look forward to those answers. Thank you.

Chairman WALBERG. I thank the gentleman, and on behalf of the members of the Committee, I thank Secretary Chavez-DeRemer for discussing the Trump administration's plans for smaller and more effective government. Its plans to ensure there are fewer, but more effective regulations, and its efforts so that skilled workers can fill jobs, and make our economy stronger.

I also want to say thank you for your comments, direct comments, about your desire for a growing workforce, a well-trained, and with significant choice in movement in the workforce as well, in the workplace. Also, your clear understanding that good opportunities for workers demand great opportunities for employers as well to succeed.

That all workers should have a reasonable expectation to work in a safe environment, and to reasonably expect to return safe at the end of the day as well. I appreciate that. The Biden-Harris administration reversed some commonsense policies that were enacted by the first Trump administration in favor of radical one size fits all regulations that prioritized labor union leaders, expanded the Federal bureaucracy, and pushed the radical DEI agenda at times.

Our hearing today provides good news that the Trump administration is advancing economic policies to unleash the American workforce. President Trump is putting a stop to the job killing and inflation driving regulatory blitz and businesses and workers are optimistic. I just sense it back in my district.

The Committee looks forward to review DOL efforts on behalf of American workers and businesses, and we look forward to speaking with you again, as you have offered about what you have heard on your tour of our great nation. With that and no further business to be dealt with at this time, I declare the Committee adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 1 p.m., the Committee was adjourned.]

[Additional submissions from Rep. Adams follows:]

[Judge blocks State Department layoffs](#)[\[SPONSORED\] Adapting to AI-driven bot threats](#)

An Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs employee said individuals who have filed discrimination complaints with the agency are calling for updates on their cases but cannot get information. PM IMAGES / GETTY IMAGES

[Workforce](#)

Federal contract employees who alleged discrimination forced to wait as enforcement agency is dismantled

Layoffs are scheduled to take effect at the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs on June 6. Between the reduction in force and separation incentives, the agency's workforce is expected to shrink by about 90%.

SEAN MICHAEL NEWHOUSE | MAY 15, 2025

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Even as the Trump administration has moved to significantly downsize the Labor Department's Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs, federal contract employees who have filed discrimination complaints with the agency are calling for updates on their cases. While OFCCP, in some instances, has validated their allegations, staffers can't inform the contractors because the agency's work is largely paused.

"Staff members are informing complainants that the process is held in abeyance until further notice and, at this time, the agency doesn't have an update," according to an OFCCP employee who is on administrative leave and is scheduled to be laid off under reduction-in-force procedures. "But a lot of these victims have been waiting for quite some time and haven't been provided with a true, accurate update on where their case stands."

OFCCP is responsible for enforcing [Section 503](#) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in federal contracting, and the [Vietnam Era Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act of 1974](#), which requires federal contractors and subcontractors to take affirmative action to employ and advance certain veterans.

6/18/25, 3:55 PM

Federal contract employees who alleged discrimination forced to wait as enforcement agency is dismantled - Government Executive

The agency used to perform investigations under [Executive Order 11246](#), a 1965 presidential directive that established antidiscrimination requirements for federal contractors and subcontractors, but [Trump repealed it](#) on the second day of his second term and since then OFCCP's work has mostly been on hold.

Still, cases under the anti-discrimination laws for individuals with disabilities and veterans are piling up.

The OFCCP employee said that routine audits to ensure compliance with both laws as well as cases of complaints from individuals with disabilities and veterans are paused but respectively number in the several hundreds.

"There are a lot of cases — a lot of complaint investigations, some are high profile — that are in the process of being settled for veterans and individuals with disabilities, but it's currently on pause and those issues may go wayside," the employee said.

The individual also said that complaints submitted since OFCCP's work stoppage haven't even been processed.

"Typically you get a complaint, the regional offices will review it, process it and then assign it to the investigators. The regional offices haven't even processed any of those cases since Jan. 24 due to the secretary's guidance that everything will be held in abeyance," the employee said. "So you have a whole caseload nationwide of complaints being filed. None of those people have received responses yet."

DOL did not respond to a request for comment.

The department on April 16 put employees in [five OFCCP regions and its enforcement branch on administrative leave](#). Then, on May 6, it sent out 30-day RIF notices.

"It's frustrating," Daryl Laurie, president of the American Federation of Government Employees' National Council of Field Labor Locals, [said in a statement](#). "The department did not provide the proper 120-day notice of the RIF to the union as is required by our collective bargaining agreement and it got an unnecessary waiver from [the Office of Personnel Management] so that it only had to provide a 30-day RIF notice to the employees rather than the required 60-day notice. DOL could have been transparent with its OFCCP employees about what it was doing and allowed them to make an informed decision about their future."

AFGE reported that, between RIFs and separation incentives, OFCCP has reduced its workforce from 485 as of September 2024 to about 50 between the national office in Washington, D.C., and the only remaining field office in Dallas. This is in line with an internal February DOL memo that proposed [reducing the agency's staff by about 90%](#).

OFCCP in fiscal 2024 recovered \$22.5 million for 12,756 contract employees, according to [DOL's annual performance report](#).

During the [April 30 Cabinet meeting](#), Labor Secretary Lori Chavez-DeRemer said she had "eliminated discriminatory DEI offices" in her department, including OFCCP.

"We were really punishing a lot of these companies. If they weren't complying, they weren't going to have a federal contract," she said. "We've let go of that program completely."

doing was out of step, if not flat out contradictory, to our country's laws, and all reform options are on the table to bring OFCCP into compliance with its constitutional and statutory bounds."

Eschbach also wrote that the agency would examine contractors' previously submitted affirmative action plans to determine if there's evidence that the policies promoted "longstanding unlawful discrimination" and, as part of an effort to deter diversity, equity and inclusion programs, identify potential civil compliance investigations of corporations, non-profits and higher education institutions.

Prior to leading OFCCP, Eschbach worked at a law firm where [she represented SpaceX](#), which is one of Department of Government Efficiency head Elon Musk's companies.

The employee said that the weakening of OFCCP will give contractors a free pass.

"We're weaponizing contractors now to do anything that they want without having to follow any rules [and] without any consequences," they said. "All this has caused chaos and confusion for not only the federal government workers who work there, but chaos and confusion for the victims who are standing there not sure what to do, and contractors who are trying to remain in compliance [and] are no longer sure if they're going to be in trouble for remaining in compliance. The chaos and confusion is everywhere." [G](#)

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Federal contract employees who alleged discrimination forced to wait as enforcement agency is dismantled - Government Executive

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**Open Letter to the Federal Contractor Community
from Former U.S. Department of Labor Officials**

April 15, 2025

For over six decades, America has upheld a fundamental promise: when businesses work for our federal government, they commit to a higher standard – they must actively combat discrimination and create opportunities for all workers. In 1965, after the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, President Lyndon B. Johnson issued Executive Order (EO) 11246 - Equal Employment Opportunity, prohibiting discrimination by federal contractors on the basis of race, color, religion, and national origin – later expanded to include sex, sexual orientation and gender identity.¹ In the 60 years since, through Republican and Democratic Administrations, this Executive Order has also required those who do business with the federal government to regularly review their employment practices for potential discrimination, and make good faith efforts to remedy any problems they identified. These federal contractors employ over 20 percent of the American workforce.

Compliance with EO 11246 did not involve race, gender, or other preferences or quotas. Rather, the implementing regulations promoted merit in hiring, compensation, and promotion practices, as well as compliance with bedrock civil rights law by ensuring qualified individuals were not excluded based on their background. These programs have expanded opportunities and fostered work environments where employees can reach their potential and drive innovation and organizational performance.

On the second day of the Administration, the Trump Administration issued EO 14173, which revoked EO 11246, gutting its protections.² Equally troubling, the Administration is using threats and intimidation to deter contractors from engaging in lawful actions to promote diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) initiatives.³

¹ President Johnson sought to ensure that the promise of non-discrimination in the Civil Rights Act of 1964 would lead to a meaningful expansion of economic opportunity, as he explained delivering a commencement address at Howard University in 1965. Heather Timmons, *Why LBJ signed executive order 11246 that Trump rescinded*, Reuters (Jan. 23, 2025), available at <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/why-president-johnson-signed-executive-order-1965-that-trump-rescinded-2025-01-23/>. For more about this history, see The Institute for Workplace Equality, *Executive Order 11246: 50 Years of Equality at Work*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8JcPpBZYIxm>.

² EO 14173, *Ending Illegal Discrimination and Restoring Merit-Based Opportunity*. 90 Fed. Reg. 8633 (Jan. 21, 2025). EO 11246 was part of a long line of executive actions stretching back to 1941, supported by both Democratic and Republican administrations, to ensure taxpayer dollars were not used to discriminate based on race or other protected characteristics. Congress also passed laws addressing discrimination by federal contractors based on disability and veterans' status and those statutory frameworks remain in force.

³ Jory Heckman, *Federal contractor watchdog office seeks to 'deter DEI' at firms working with agencies*, Federal News Network, (March 25, 2025), available at <https://federalnewsnetwork.com/contracting/2025/03/federal-contractor-watchdog-office-seeks-to-deter-dei-at-firms-working-with-agencies/>.

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As former officials of the U.S. Department of Labor's (DOL) Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP), the federal agency responsible for enforcing EO 11246, and former Solicitors of Labor who supported that enforcement work, we write because decades of progress to create good jobs and fair merit-based workplaces are now at risk. We seek to help federal contractors and other employers navigate this complex environment, providing clarity about their options and obligations under the law.⁴

In implementing EO 14173, the new Director of OFCCP, Catherine Eschbach, issued troubling statements indicating a fundamental misunderstanding of the agency's work, describing OFCCP's past activities as significantly "out of step if not . . . contradictory to the nation's laws." She then announced plans to take steps she has no authority to take. She stated that the federal government is considering investigations and enforcement actions against federal contractors designed to "deter DEI programs or principles." She also proposes to review the affirmative action program documents contractors prepared and submitted when EO 11246 was in force, to identify potential investigation targets.⁵

Federal, state, and local civil rights laws, including Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, continue to protect America's workers, but President Trump's decision to abandon EO 11246's proactive enforcement program leaves employees who work for federal contractors more vulnerable to discrimination. The Administration's subsequent actions, including these statements by Director Eschbach, have also fueled widespread concern and uncertainty, leaving federal contractors – and other employers across the nation – unsure about their obligations under our civil rights laws. Many employers find themselves caught between long standing commitments to equal opportunity for all their employees and complex risks from multiple directions.

We write to explain why, despite the chaos and confusion, contractors should carefully weigh the risks of backing away from employment practices to promote equal opportunity for all. Conducting self-assessments, including data analysis to detect and prevent discrimination, has helped employers thrive by leveraging the full talent across America. This work also protects employers from liability by ensuring compliance with federal, state, and local anti-discrimination laws. OFCCP also carries out a Congressional mandate for DOL to provide equal opportunity for veterans and people with disabilities – and this mandate remains in effect.⁶ Despite this clear Congressional

⁴ This document contains general legal information and the views of the authors and is provided for educational purposes only. It is not legal advice. Readers should seek advice from qualified counsel for their specific situations.

⁵ Heckman, *supra* note 3, see also OFCCP News Release, *US Department of Labor Appoints Catherine Eschbach as Director of the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs* (March 24, 2025), available at <https://www.dol.gov/newsroom/releases/ofccp/ofccp20250324>.

⁶ OFCCP is charged with enforcing Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which requires contractors to promote and provide equal opportunity for qualified individuals with disabilities, and the Vietnam Era Veterans' Readjustment Act of 1974, which applies requirements to qualified protected veterans who work for federal contractors and subcontractors.

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requirement, DOL has halted any work by DOL employees to protect workers with disabilities and veterans to fulfill DOL's enforcement responsibilities.⁷

Continuing effective discrimination prevention programs is also fully lawful. As explained in more detail below, these Administration actions are contrary to well-established law. First, the President may not override Congressional civil rights mandates by executive order. Second, the Administration's coercive attempts to prevent contractors from engaging in good faith efforts to ensure equal opportunity improperly threaten due process and free speech protections. Third, there is no basis to retroactively impose liability now for contractors' past good faith efforts to comply with OFCCP's regulations. Indeed, President Trump cannot have it both ways, revoking EO 11246, but somehow still allowing the agency to investigate contractors and take enforcement action against their diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility programs.

Because the Administration's actions are legally unsound and harmful to workers, employers, and America's economy, we urge federal contractors to carefully evaluate how they can best achieve the equal opportunity commitments they have made through their diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility programs. These programs not only serve important business and risk management objectives, but also uphold fundamental civil rights protections and promote fair treatment and opportunity for all workers. At the end of this letter, we provide some specific recommendations concerning how employers can take legal and effective actions that promote these objectives.

President Trump Unlawfully Targets Employers Over Their Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Policies

In his Executive Order, President Trump went beyond simply removing requirements for federal contractors and sought to "deter DEI programs or principles," using the vague and undefined terms "illegal DEI and DEIA policies." EO 14173 also stated an intention to "encourage the private sector to end illegal discrimination and preferences, including DEI" through enforcement actions, and to require federal contractors and grantees to certify that they had no "DEI" programs that would violate anti-discrimination law, without defining what was meant by "DEI."

On March 24, 2025, DOL's news release announcing the appointment of Catherine Eschbach as the new OFCCP Director stated, "President Trump made clear in his executive order on eliminating DEI that EO 11246 had facilitated federal contractors adopting DEI practices out of step with the requirements of our Nation's civil rights laws and that, with the rescission of EO 11246, the President mandates federal contractors wind those practices down within 90 days."⁸

⁷ Pursuant to Secretary's Order 03-2025 investigations have been "held in abeyance pending further guidance." Available at <https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/OPA/newsreleases/2025/01/Secretarys-Order-03-2025.pdf>.

⁸ OFCCP News Release, *supra* note 5.

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On that same day, to implement EO 14173, as reported in the media,⁹ Director Eschbach went even further in attempting to force private employers to stop voluntary equal opportunity efforts. Director Eschbach sent an email to all staff proposing to turn OFCCP's entire mission on its head. She asserted that OFCCP will, among other things, identify potential "civil compliance investigations" to "deter DEI" – not limiting this to "illegal DEI" – and examine affirmative action program documents that were submitted to the agency in the past, looking for "unlawful discrimination" that could be the subject of investigations and enforcement.¹⁰ She also threatened to use "all enforcement options" against contractors that did not "wind down" their own internal compliance and equal opportunity work – failing to recognize that employers may voluntarily continue these lawful efforts and that EO 14173 did not mandate the "winding down" of contractors' programs.¹¹ President Trump and Director Eschbach may not threaten or pursue federal enforcement against private employers for engaging in lawful diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility programs.

President Trump and Director Eschbach Have No Authority to Forbid Lawful Equal Opportunity Programs by Federal Contractors

The Administration's conduct violates constitutional and statutory law for three significant reasons. First, Congress has already established standards for voluntary equal opportunity programs through statutory law, as interpreted by the Supreme Court, and no Executive Order can lawfully contradict them. Second, the government may not pursue enforcement actions against employers that complied in good faith with the laws and regulations that existed prior to January 20, 2025, by sanctioning them based on their previously submitted affirmative action programs. Third, the threats of both prospective and retrospective enforcement – including requiring certifications – raise substantial constitutional and other concerns, from violations of due process and the First Amendment, to the utter absence of any authority for OFCCP to take these actions after the revocation of EO 11246.

⁹ Heckman, *supra* note 3.

¹⁰ Her email stated she intended to (1) "advise the Secretary of measures to deter DEI programs or principles by identifying potential civil compliance investigations;" (2) examine "federal contractors' previously submitted affirmative action plans to determine whether they indicate the presence of longstanding unlawful discrimination and whether it is appropriate for OFCCP to undertake any investigation and enforcement actions or refer the matter," and (3) "verify all federal contractors have wound down their use of affirmative action plans and implement all enforcement options to ensure President Trump's executive order has been complied with."

¹¹ EO 14173 states that "[f]or 90 days from the date of this order, Federal contractors may continue to comply with the regulatory scheme in effect on January 20, 2025." 90 Fed. Reg. 8633, § 3(iv)(b)(i) (Jan. 21 2025). Nowhere in the executive order does it reference a mandate to "wind down" programs or authorize OFCCP to enforce the EO.

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1. President Trump may not change legal standards established by Congress, as interpreted by the Supreme Court, through an Executive Order

President Trump cannot override any substantive federal law concerning employment discrimination via Executive Order. Title VII continues to prohibit discrimination in employment because of race, sex, and other protected characteristics. Decades of judicial precedent affirm employer efforts to lawfully promote equal opportunity in the workplace through voluntary practices. The Administration's efforts to suggest that diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility practices are inherently discriminatory do not have the force of law – and there is ample existing law to the contrary.

It is well-established law that employers may express their interest in providing equal opportunity through having a general diversity policy and working to address barriers to equality.¹² The Supreme Court has recognized that employers have an “affirmative obligation to prevent violations” and that Title VII provides a catalyst for employers to self-evaluate their employment practices to eliminate discrimination.¹³ In fact, where employers have a lack of diversity in their workforce, as compared to the qualified labor pool in their geographic area, proactive recruitment efforts can represent a good-faith effort to provide equal opportunity. Well-crafted diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility policies and practices, including utilizing tools to help identify and address barriers to equal opportunity, promote compliance and can help reduce the risk of a discrimination lawsuit.¹⁴ Indeed, as one federal appellate judge considering a challenge to EO 14173 recently stated, the Administration's Executive Orders on DEIA “do not purport to establish the illegality of all efforts to advance diversity, equity or inclusion,

¹²*Peterson v. Hewlett-Packard Co.*, 358 F. 3d 599 (9th Cir. 2004) (goal of diversity policy to reduce sexual orientation discrimination is consistent with goals of civil rights laws); *Bernstein v. St. Paul Companies, Inc.*, 134 F. Supp. 2d 730, 739 (D. Md. 2001) (“A company's (or its CEO's) commitment to ‘diversity,’ if expressed in terms of creating opportunities for employees of different races and both genders, or fostering workplace tolerance, is not proof of discriminatory motive with respect to any specific hiring decision.”); *Lutes v. Goldin*, 62 F. Supp. 2d 118, 131 (D.D.C.1999) (concern for ensuring equal opportunity and removing barriers does not support a claim of discrimination when there is no evidence of any preference for one group over the other).

¹³ See, e.g., *Faragher v. City of Boca Raton*, 524 U.S. 775, 806 (1998) (recognizing employers’ “affirmative obligation to prevent violations” and citing favorably to EEOC guidance advising employers to “take all steps necessary to prevent” harassment); *Albemarle Paper Co. v. Moody*, 422 U. S. 405, 417-418 (1975) (observing that backpay is the catalyst that “causes employers and unions to self-examine and to self-evaluate their employment practices and to endeavor to eliminate, so far as possible, the last vestiges of an unfortunate and ignominious page in this country's history”).

¹⁴ Recently, the state Attorneys General of Massachusetts, Illinois, Arizona, California, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Maine, Maryland, Minnesota, Nevada, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island, and Vermont issued Multi-state Guidance on the importance of continuing lawful diversity, equity, and inclusion programs to prevent discrimination. Multistate Guidance Concerning Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Employment Initiatives from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and State of Illinois Offices of Attorney General and others (Feb. 13, 2025), available at <https://www.mass.gov/doc/multi-state-guidance-concerning-diversity-equity-inclusion-and-accessibility-employment-initiatives/download>.

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and they should not be so understood.”¹⁵ Any enforcement threat in the Administration’s new Executive Order may apply only to conduct that independently violates existing federal anti-discrimination law. The Administration cannot alter any existing obligations under anti-discrimination laws, or the decades of case law interpreting them.¹⁶

2. The Administration may not retroactively impose liability for complying with prior federal requirements

The Administration may not punish federal contractors for their past actions to comply in good faith with federal law and regulations as they existed at the time. The OFCCP Director proposes to embark on a fishing expedition reviewing the data and documents OFCCP has collected over the years to look for so-called “discriminatory DEI,” and then threatens to have OFCCP undertake investigations or refer these matters to other enforcement agencies. This is clear overreach and a potential constitutional due process violation.

Fundamental principles of due process require that contractors be given fair notice that their conduct may violate the law.¹⁷ Here, not only was there no notice, the government itself had previously *required* contractors to engage in the very practices to proactively assess potential barriers to equal opportunity that it now seeks to deter. The government may not find contractors in violation of the law for acting in clear reliance on the legal standards as the government had defined them at the time.¹⁸ Longstanding OFCCP regulations already forbade discrimination, did not require balancing the workforce, and did not permit racial preferences or quotas.¹⁹ Nor is there any basis to find contractors’ prior regulatory compliance efforts are now discriminatory.

3. The threats of enforcement and certification requirements raise serious constitutional and other legal issues, including the absence of any underlying agency authority

Trump’s EO 14173 also improperly threatens investigations and enforcement actions against employers for engaging in “illegal DEI” – even outside of contractors’ prior affirmative action program documents. Director Eschbach has gone even further, announcing an unqualified effort to “deter DEI.”²⁰ Seeking to force private entities to abandon lawful efforts to ensure compliance with Title VII is a misuse of enforcement power that exceeds the President’s legitimate enforcement authority, and raises significant constitutional concerns.

¹⁵ *NADOHE v. Trump*, No. 25-1189, (4th Cir., Mar. 14, 2025), Judge Harris, concurring.

¹⁶ See *Chicago Women in Trades v. Trump*, No. 25 C 2005 (N.D. Ill., Mar. 27, 2025).

¹⁷ *F.C.C. v. Fox Television Stations, Inc.*, 567 U.S. 239, 253 (2012) (“A fundamental principle in our legal system is that laws which regulate persons or entities must give fair notice of conduct that is forbidden or required.”)

¹⁸ See *United States v. Pennsylvania Industrial Chemical Corp.*, 411 US 655 (1973).

¹⁹ See 41 CFR 60-2.16.

²⁰ *Supra* note 10.

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The proposed investigations and enforcement actions are based on vague and undefined standards, raising Fifth Amendment due process concerns.²¹ Due process requires the government to provide fair notice and clear enforcement standards so that “regulated parties. . . know what is required of them so they may act accordingly [and] . . . so that those enforcing the law do not act in an arbitrary or discriminatory way.”²² Contractors are currently confused about what is required of them and have no way to know whether a particular policy or practice will be deemed “illegal DEI” or otherwise targeted and lead to a government investigation.

Further, under the Fourth Amendment, courts have held that OFCCP may only pursue a targeted investigation into a contractor if the government has “specific evidence of an existing violation.”²³ Investigating employers for engaging in lawful efforts to promote equal opportunity through diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives does not constitute specific evidence of an existing violation.

The enforcement threats also have the potential to chill speech in violation of the First Amendment, by improperly discouraging employers from promoting values of diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility.²⁴ Although the federal government has chosen to dismantle diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility programs in its own workplaces at its own peril, the government cannot prohibit private employers from engaging in fully lawful strategies to advance equal opportunity for all.

²¹ See *NADOHE v. Trump*, Case No. 1:25-cv-00333-ABA (D.Md., Feb. 21, 2025) (issuing a preliminary injunction against the enforcement provisions of EO 14173 based on potential to violate Fifth Amendment Due Process Clause). While the Fourth Circuit has stayed enforcement of this facial challenge pending appeal, two members of the panel each wrote separately noting the potential for infringement of constitutional rights, including Due Process, depending on how the Administration sought to apply EO 14173 in practice. *NADOHE v. Trump*, 4th Cir., *supra* note 15.

²² *F.C.C. v. Fox Television*, 567 U.S. at 253.

²³ See, e.g., *Bank of Am. v. Solis*, No. CV 09-2009 (EGS), 2014 WL 4661287, at *8 (D.D.C. July 2, 2014) (recognizing that OFCCP must meet a probable cause standard for an onsite investigation and either show “specific evidence of an existing violation” or a neutral scheduling plan (citing *Marshall v. Barlow’s, Inc.*, 436 U.S. 307, 320 (1978)); *Beverly Enters., Inc. v. Herman*, 130 F. Supp. 2d 1, 13 (D.D.C. 2000) (stating that probable cause standard of “specific evidence of an existing violation” has been interpreted to require that the proposed search be: (1) authorized by statute; (2) properly limited in scope and (3) initiated in a proper manner).

²⁴ *NADOHE v. Trump*, D.Md., *supra* note 21; *Chicago Women in Trades v. Trump*, *supra* note 16 (issuing a temporary restraining order against the enforcement and certification provisions of EO 14173 based on potential chilling effect on speech). In the Fourth Circuit opinion on the government’s motion for a stay in the *NADOHE* case, two judges noted in their concurrences their concerns about potential free speech implications of EO 14173. As Judge Diaz stated, “Under the most basic tenets of the First Amendment, there should be room for open discussion and principled debate about DEI programs, and whether its corresponding values should guide admissions, hiring, scholarship, funding, or workplace and educational practices.” *NADOHE*, 4th Cir., *supra* note 15, Judge Diaz, concurring. And Judge Harris said, “Agency enforcement actions that go beyond the Orders’ narrow scope may well raise serious First Amendment and Due Process concerns, for the reasons cogently explained by the district court.” *NADOHE*, 4th Cir., *supra* note 15, Judge Harris, concurring.

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Further, after the revocation of EO 11246, OFCCP has no authority to pursue investigations or enforcement actions against contractors for “discriminatory DEI” based on race, sex, or any of the other categories that EO 11246 covered. President Trump revoked EO 11246. The DOL Secretary’s Order 03-2025 states: “DOL no longer has any authority under rescinded EO 11246” and directed all employees “to cease and desist all investigative and enforcement activity under the rescinded EO 11246 and the regulations promulgated under it,”²⁵ which leaves OFCCP unable to enforce anti-discrimination standards, other than those related to veterans’ status or disability. Without the underlying authorization, this enforcement would be entirely *ultra vires*.

In addition, EO 14173 states that, “[f]or 90 days from the date of this order, Federal contractors may continue to comply with the regulatory scheme in effect on January 20, 2025.”²⁶ This does not mean it is or will become unlawful for contractors to continue their voluntary efforts to detect and prevent discrimination, simply because such efforts previously were required by OFCCP’s regulations. Moreover, the government cannot prohibit private entities from implementing lawful policies and practices of their choosing. Accordingly, there is no authority for OFCCP to “verify all contractors have wound down” their programs and threaten enforcement.

Finally, the Administration may not require contractors to certify compliance without setting forth clear standards for what constitutes “illegal DEI” and undertaking proper federal administrative procedures. At least two courts have already identified constitutional and other problems with the certification requirement.²⁷ Indeed, the Supreme Court has held that requiring entities receiving federal funds to adopt the government’s viewpoint as their own, by certifying they oppose a particular policy, is an unconstitutional condition that violates First Amendment rights.²⁸ In addition, no government agency or contracting office may issue a certification form to contractors as a condition of continuing their federal contracts, without ensuring compliance with well-established procedures under the Paperwork Reduction Act.²⁹

²⁵Secretary’s Order 03-2025, *supra* note 7.

²⁶90 Fed. Reg. 8633, § 3(iv)(b)(i) (Jan. 21 2025).

²⁷*NADOHE v. Trump*, *supra* note 21; *Chicago Women in Trades v. Trump*, *supra* note 16.

²⁸*AID v. Alliance for Open Society Intern.*, 570 U.S. 205 (2013). The *NADOHE* District Court applied this precedent in enjoining the certification provision, noting the Supreme Court’s concern that it would be improper for the government to use the threat of denying federal funding to compel speech that was unrelated to the purpose of the funding. Here, requiring a federal contractor who provides goods or services to adopt the government’s view of diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility as harmful and discriminatory would clearly impact protected conduct that likely is not related to the underlying purpose of the contract.

²⁹Contractors are not required to respond to government forms and other requests for data and information that have been sent in the same form to 10 or more people, and that have not been approved by the Office of Management and Budget according to the procedures set forth at 5 C.F.R. Part 1320 *et seq.*

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Federal Contractors Should Continue to Use Lawful and Effective Tools to Ensure Equal Opportunity

As explained above, the effort to forbid federal contractors from taking proactive measures that had previously been used to comply with EO 11246's implementing regulations is fundamentally at odds with Title VII and the Constitution. Nor should federal contractors voluntarily agree to abandon these powerful tools that help employers attract and retain qualified talent and foster innovation and business performance – as well as provide sound risk management.³⁰

Leading employers, including contractors, regularly conduct voluntary self-evaluations to prevent discrimination, such as analyzing workforce data, setting aspirational benchmarks, conducting barrier analyses, and evaluating the impact of their employment practices. There are critical reasons to continue these practices to root out discrimination and promote equal opportunity. Rather than discouraging effective efforts to prevent discrimination, our federal civil rights officials should actively encourage and amplify such practices to advance our nation's shared commitment to equal opportunity and human dignity in the workplace. Below we share some reasons these programs remain essential, and some design recommendations to promote effective and lawful practices. Indeed, high-performing federal contractors are continuing to prioritize this work, recognizing that inclusive practices drive measurable outcomes – including operational excellence and competitive advantage.

1. Proactive Barrier Analysis Remains Fully Lawful and Essential to Prevent Discrimination

Barrier analysis is a self-assessment approach used to identify and remove obstacles that prevent equal employment opportunity. It investigates unusual patterns in an employer's employment practices to evaluate whether particular employment practices provide fair opportunities to everyone, and do not favor or unfairly disadvantage individuals because of a protected basis. It enables employers to spot potential liability risks and also ensures that decisions about hiring, pay, and promotion rely on legitimate job-related qualifications.

Examples of barrier analysis include examining a hiring process to understand high rejection rates for qualified candidates from certain backgrounds, such as ensuring that interview procedures accurately assess job related criteria and that job descriptions identify and remove unnecessary requirements. It can also include analyzing high turnover rates for particular workers to determine potential driving factors. Pay equity analysis is another form of proactive analysis to make sure that pay practices are fair and non-discriminatory. Where the analysis shows potential problems, it is critical to understand the root cause of the barrier and how to remove it. This sometimes involves

³⁰ Letter of State Attorneys General, *supra* note 14; National Institute for Workers' Rights (NIWR), *NIWR and NELA Warn Corporations Of Increased Liability Risk In Rolling Back Diversity, Equity And Inclusion Programs* (April 8, 2025), available at <https://niwr.org/2025/04/08/release-risk-eliminating-dei-programs>.

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more detailed data analysis, as well as interviews and listening sessions with employees and managers and review of policy documents or survey data.³¹

Employers that decline to track applicant flow data and analyze their hiring and recruitment practices for potential barriers, or fail to assess pay equity or other practices, face an increased risk of liability.³² They may miss critical insights into policies or practices that are unlawfully excluding or negatively affecting qualified workers and thus, they cannot take steps to address them.

2. Collecting and Analyzing Workforce Data

OFCCP's regulations required federal contractors to collect and analyze applicant flow data as well as workforce demographic data. This allows contractors to ensure they are fully utilizing the available workers in their geographic area who have the skills and abilities to do the job.

Notwithstanding the revocation of EO 11246, to comply with federal law, covered employers, including federal contractors, should continue to collect and analyze applicant flow and workforce data. Title VII requires that employers "make and keep such records relevant to the determinations of whether unlawful employment practices have been or are being committed."³³ Collecting applicant flow and workforce data is a critical part of determining whether an employer has unlawful employment practices. In 2008, during President George W. Bush's Administration, the legal counsel of the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) issued an informal discussion letter expressly stating that "the EEOC's regulations require companies to maintain, and have available for inspection, data by identifiable race, sex, and ethnic group for all job applicants."³⁴ The letter explained that this data was "necessary for employers and the EEOC to determine if discrimination has occurred."³⁵ EEOC regulations instruct employers to provide that the records are kept separate from the employee's other

³¹ For an example of this approach, see RAND, Miriam Matthews, et al, *Unequal Opportunity: Barriers to Employment in the Department of Defense Civilian Workforce*, available at https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_briefs/RB10017.html.

³² An employment practice violates Title VII where it unjustifiably screens out employees on the basis of race, gender or other protected characteristics. 42 U.S.C. §2000e-2(k); *Griggs v. Duke Power Co.*, 401 US 424, 431 (1973) ("What is required by Congress is the removal of artificial, arbitrary, and unnecessary barriers to employment when the barriers operate invidiously to discriminate on the basis of racial or other impermissible classification.")

³³ Title VII, 42 U.S.C. § 2000e-8(c).

³⁴ EEOC Informal Discussion Letter dated Nov. 18, 2008, available at <https://www.eeoc.gov/foia/eeoc-informal-discussion-letter-200> (emphasis added); see also Title VII, §. 2000e-8(c), citing 29 C.F.R. § 1607.4A.

³⁵ *Id.*; see also EEOC Pre-Employment Inquiries and Race, available at <https://www.eeoc.gov/pre-employment-inquiries-and-race> (explaining that an employer may request information about an applicant's race where it has a legitimate business need, such as "to track applicant flow").

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personnel information, and that the employer does not make the information available to those responsible for employment decisions.³⁶

For decades, EEOC has collected workforce data by job category from employers with more than 100 employees for enforcement, self-assessment, and research.³⁷ In addition, several state laws require employers to track demographic data for purposes of pay data reporting.³⁸ Analyzing current workforce data is a critical strategy to assess whether promotion, assignment, pay, and other policies are compliant with federal, state, and local civil rights requirements.³⁹

3. Tracking Progress Through Well-Crafted Benchmarks

Some employers use benchmarking or aspirational goal setting to monitor for potential discrimination in recruitment, hiring, promotion, and other practices. OFCCP regulations supported this practice. Even in the absence of federal mandates it remains a useful tool for employers. Well-crafted benchmarks or aspirational goals reflect the reasonable expectation that under a fair and open process, qualified individuals of all backgrounds will apply and be selected, and there will not be any significant patterns that favor one group over others. Where there are unexpected discrepancies, this provides an indicator to investigate further to determine if there may be artificial barriers that exclude qualified workers.

An appropriate benchmark helps employers to assess their full utilization of the qualified labor pool in their geographic area. Under existing law, these goals or benchmarks must not be mandatory or inflexible quotas that dictate the selection of a certain number of people from specific demographic groups.⁴⁰ Benchmarks should be based on an analysis of the qualified, available labor pool. Setting realistic goals, grounded in what it takes to be successful in the job and where the job is located, helps to make sure an employer's benchmarks advance its equal opportunity commitment.⁴¹ Employers should also establish safeguards to make sure hiring and promotion decisions focus on job-related skills and abilities so that decisions remain merit-based, and do not exclude qualified workers because of a protected characteristic. Training and guidance for managers should emphasize that their individual decisions about particular candidates

³⁶ 29 C.F.R. § 1602.13.

³⁷ 29 C.F.R. 1602.7.

³⁸ See, e.g., California Government Code § 12999; Illinois, Equal Pay Act amendments requiring employers to obtain equal pay registration certificates, 820 ILCS 112, Sec. 11; Mass. Gen. Laws ch. 141 (2024). See also New Jersey S. Res. 104, 2018 Leg., 218th Sess. (NJ, 2018), which applies to entities that contract with the state.

³⁹ See Lynn Clements, David Cohen and Victoria Lipnic, *Workforce Data Considerations After DEI Order*, *Law 360* (February 27, 2025) (detailing considerations for continuing to collect workforce data.)

⁴⁰ *Ricci v. DeStefano*, 557 U.S. 557, 583 (2009); *Richmond v. JA Croson*, 488 U.S. 469, 499 (1989).

⁴¹ *Johnson v. Transportation Agency, Santa Clara Cty.*, 480 US 616, 632 (1986).

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should be confined to their qualifications and the requirements of the job, and that race, gender or other protected characteristics should not be considered in those decisions.⁴²

Setting benchmarks in this way, and pursuing aspirations to expand opportunity, are not quotas and are not discriminatory.⁴³ They can help employers evaluate their practices to ensure there are no unfair limitations in how they utilize talent.

OFCCP's History and Impact Show the Harm of These Unlawful Actions

As former DOL OFCCP and Office of the Solicitor officials, we categorically reject Director Eschbach's claims that the work of OFCCP and EO 11246 itself "facilitated" the adoption of so-called discriminatory "DEI." This deeply misunderstands the history and impact of the agency and its work.

EO 11246 and its regulatory framework not only forbade discrimination but also went further and required contractors to take steps to open job opportunities to all, expand recruitment and outreach, ensure equal pay, and remove barriers in hiring, promotion and other employment opportunities, so that qualified workers were not disadvantaged because of favoritism, stereotypes, and other forms of bias due to their backgrounds. OFCCP conducted compliance evaluations to assess whether federal contractors were meeting their obligations under its regulations. OFCCP's regulations specifically barred quotas, preferences, and set asides.⁴⁴

OFCCP and EO 11246 filled key gaps in federal civil rights protections, complementing the work of EEOC. As part of OFCCP's compliance evaluations of contractors, OFCCP reviewed hiring and pay data and information about EEO policies, and went onsite to talk with workers, to root out patterns of discrimination that may not otherwise come to light. Often workers do not have information about who was hired, what colleagues are paid, or how they are treated. Without this information, workers will not have the evidence of discrimination they need to support a charge of discrimination with the EEOC, which does not have authority to conduct routine compliance reviews of

⁴² See *supra* note 12; see also, e.g., *Mlynyczak v. Bodman*, 442 F. 3d 1050, 1054 (7th Cir. 2006) ("while [the goals] stress active recruitment of women and minority candidates, they do not contain quotas, nor do they authorize management to give preference to less-qualified female or minority applicants for jobs or promotions. Instead, the Chicago DOE office is bound by the rules in the DOE Merit Promotion Policy, under which selecting officials may not make a hiring or promotion decision based on race, color, sex, national origin, age, or disability.").

⁴³ *Christensen v. Equitable Life Assur. Soc. of US*, 767 F. 2d 340, 344 (7th Cir. 1985) (fact that employer had adopted goals for recruiting Black employees into executive positions not evidence of discrimination where there was no evidence it affected the decisions about plaintiff); *Reed v. Agilent Technologies, Inc.*, 174 F. Supp. 2d 176, 186 (D. Del. 2001) (the mere existence of a policy promoting diversity awareness is not evidence of discrimination . . . evidence regarding the aspirational purpose of an employer's diversity policy, and its intent to ameliorate any underutilization of certain groups, is not sufficient); *Lutes*, 62 F. Supp. 2d at 132 (existence of affirmative action plan not evidence of discrimination against individual where plan not considered by decision-makers).

⁴⁴ 41 CFR 60-2.16.

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employers as OFCCP did. Finally, the regulatory requirement that federal contractors regularly review their practices and workforce data, and take steps to reduce bias and inequality, added another layer of protection for these workers.

As a result of this proactive enforcement program, OFCCP has improved the lives of American workers. From desegregating workplaces, to expanding opportunities for all in hiring and promotion, to ensuring equal pay, to uncovering workplace harassment, the agency has promoted equal employment opportunity for all employees: people of color and white individuals; women and men; LGBTQ individuals and those of all gender identities and sexual orientations; veterans; people with disabilities; and employees of all religious backgrounds. OFCCP has also helped federal contractors advance their equal opportunity commitments through technical assistance and engagement.

From 2014 to 2024, OFCCP recovered over \$260 million in lost wages for over a quarter of a million employees and job seekers impacted by discrimination. This includes providing workers with over \$107 million in back and front pay to rectify pay discrimination. In addition to financial remedies, OFCCP also helped workers of all backgrounds obtain jobs and raises. During this same period, OFCCP obtained over 22,000 job opportunities and salary adjustments for workers to remedy discrimination. Contrary to the Administration's suggestions of unequal enforcement, OFCCP had for decades pursued and obtained recoveries on behalf of all workers - including white men.

Despite OFCCP's long track record of success opening doors to opportunity, President Trump has now abandoned this critical mission. It has also been reported that OFCCP will soon lose possibly hundreds of highly talented and experienced staff who have dedicated their lives to helping workers around the country. The loss of this deep institutional knowledge about compliance assistance and equal opportunity would harm both employers and workers alike. While each past Administration has made changes to the OFCCP enforcement program to reflect Presidential policy priorities and often to expand protections, no prior President – Republican or Democrat – had ever before walked away from our nation's commitment to equal opportunity for all.

Instead, this Administration is weaponizing tools intended for civil rights enforcement against contractors that simply wish to voluntarily deploy practices that have helped them recruit, retain, and fully utilize America's talent. The Administration cannot lawfully coerce the private sector into adopting this Administration's view of diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility programs. Nor should it take away effective tools that foster innovation through diverse perspectives and create workplaces where all employees can fully contribute.

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America's enduring promise is that talent and effort – not background or origin – should determine one's path. We urge you to stand firm in your commitments to lawful diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility practices that promote civil rights compliance, true merit, and a strong economy.

Signed, /s/

Pamela Coukos, OFCCP Senior Advisor, 2011-2016

Donna Lenhoff, OFCCP Senior Civil Rights Advisor, 2011-2017

Seema Nanda, Solicitor of Labor, 2021-2025

Patrick O. Patterson, OFCCP Deputy Director, 2014-2017

Maya Raghu, OFCCP Deputy Director, Policy, 2021-2023

Dariely Rodriguez, OFCCP Chief of Staff, 2021-2022

Patricia A. Shiu, OFCCP Director, 2009-2016

M. Patricia Smith, Solicitor of Labor, 2010-2017

Shirley J. Wilcher, Deputy Assistant Secretary for OFCCP, 1994-2001

Jenny R. Yang, OFCCP Director, 2021-2023

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Trump dissolves agency reviewing Elon Musk's Tesla for potential discrimination



The San Francisco Standard

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News**Tesla discrimination probe killed as Trump axes watchdog agency**

The Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs investigated companies for unfair practices — including Elon Musk's automaker.

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Trump dissolves agency reviewing Elon Musk's Tesla for potential discrimination

By **Jonah Owen Lamb**

Published Feb. 06, 2025 • 6:33pm

A federal investigation of potential workplace discrimination at Elon Musk's Tesla Inc. has been halted after President Trump signed a Jan. 21 executive order that all but shut down the agency in charge of it, The Standard has learned.

The Department of Labor's Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs enforced equal employment laws for federal contractors. The office's employees now have little to do besides notifying companies that they will no longer be audited for potential discrimination — and, in some cases, that they won't have to pay outstanding fines.

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, which operates under a different department, sued Tesla in September 2023 for “widespread and ongoing racial harassment of its Black employees.” That case is ongoing even as Tesla's board promised to end discrimination at company sites.

Tesla — and its Fremont factory in particular — was among a group of Bay Area companies that were to be audited by the OFCCP in 2024. That investigation was still underway, and findings had not been made public, when the office was shut down.

Elon Musk's Tesla was among companies being audited by the Labor Department's Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs. | Photo by Justin Sullivan/Getty Images

Since 2012, workers at the Fremont factory have complained of rampant, systemic racial abuse from management. Black workers were routinely referred to by slurs, they said, and threatening graffiti-covered restrooms and work and break areas.

The OFCCP sent Tesla a letter last week stating that its review had stopped. “We had to mail the companies we audit to tell them they no longer have to comply with our rules or regulations,” said Aliyah Levin, president of the American Federation of Government

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Employees Local 2391, which represents 1,200 federal workers in San Francisco and eight Western states.

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Tesla's letter was one among dozens in California alone, according to Levin. OFCCP investigators were set to review the practices of more than 2,000 U.S. companies this year, including 211 in California, [according to federal data that is no longer online](#). Investigations have been canceled at the San Francisco offices of Google, Meta, Blackrock, Sony, and PG&E, among others.

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Despite its lack of name recognition, OFCCP for years served as an effective civil rights watchdog for Silicon Valley- and San Francisco-based tech companies.

In 2022, [LinkedIn was fined \\$1.8 million](#) for paying hundreds of female engineering and marketing employees in San Francisco and Sunnyvale less than men who held the same jobs.

In 2021, [Google was fined \\$2.6 million](#) for the same offense, which affected thousands of women, including nearly 300 staffers in San Francisco.

In 2020, [Cisco was fined \\$2 million](#) for underpaying women, as well as Black and Latino employees, compared with their white male counterparts.

In agreements the companies signed with the agency, all three agreed to conduct annual pay equity analyses and face continued federal security for five years.

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The OFCCP was created by executive order in 1965 under President Lyndon Johnson to ensure that federal contractors do not discriminate against employees on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. The office oversees approximately one-fifth of the U.S. labor force, according to its fast-shrinking website, by regulating the practices of private companies that contract with the federal government.

President Trump deemed the agency an “illegal” diversity, equity, and inclusion program, revoking Johnson’s executive order with his own.

The Heritage Foundation’s Project 2025, a blueprint for a right-wing takeover of government that is often touted as a roadmap for Trump’s second term in office, advocated for the elimination of the agency.

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Acting Labor Secretary Vincent N. Micone, whose department oversees the office, ordered staff to stop all work in a Jan. 24 email that was obtained by The Standard.

"Cease and desist all investigative and enforcement activity under the rescinded Executive Order 11246 and the regulations promulgated under it," Micone wrote. "This includes all pending cases, conciliation agreements, investigations, complaints, and any other enforcement-related or investigative activity."

In another email, Micone alleged that the office's work, among that of other programs, "resulted in shameful discrimination." He encouraged employees to report anyone secretly trying to continue enforcement actions by contacting the Office of Personnel Management at DEIATruth@OPM.gov.

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The OFCCP's website says it is being updated, and many links no longer work.

Levin said OFCCP employees, including roughly 80 in the Bay Area, do not know if they will have jobs or if the office will exist in any capacity. When asked about the office's future, a spokesperson said the Department of Labor could not provide any information.

Rob Sax, vice president of AFGE's National Council of Field Labor Locals, said the Jan. 21 executive order conflates union members' anti-discrimination work with diversity, equity, and inclusion programs.

"It is not about taking one group and saying you will hire them," Sax said.

Like other federal workers, the office's employees have been offered incentives to resign by the Trump administration. Sax said he told his members not to accept.

"This administration thinks it can do whatever it wants," he said, adding that Congress must step in and stop what he described as overreach by the Trump administration. "I believe at some point Congress is going to realize they're becoming superfluous. I don't think it's a crackpot belief."

Jonah Owen Lamb can be reached at jonah@sfstandard.com

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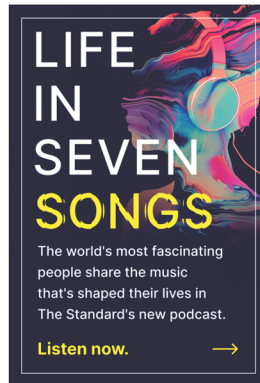
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News Release

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR ANNOUNCES BEST YEAR FOR COMPLIANCE ASSISTANCE BY OFFICE OF FEDERAL CONTRACT COMPLIANCE PROGRAMS

WASHINGTON, DC – The U.S. Department of Labor today announced that the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP) had the best year for compliance assistance and the second highest year for monetary settlements for fiscal year (FY) 2020.

OFCCP is dedicated to its important mission of ensuring equal employment opportunity and nondiscrimination in employment for the approximately 25 percent of the American workforce employed by federal contractors. The agency had its most productive period in history during the Trump Administration. In FY 2019, OFCCP set the record for recoveries at \$40.6 million, almost double any other year since the agency's inception in 1965. OFCCP continued this level of productivity in FY 2020 during the pandemic, with recoveries of \$35.6 million, the second highest year in history. From FY 2017 through FY 2020, the agency recovered approximately \$117 million in remedies for protected class members. As a point of comparison, the recoveries in this four-year period exceed the recoveries in the previous nine-year period of FY 2008-2016 combined. These monetary amounts are primarily remedies for race and sex discrimination in employment, predominantly in hiring and compensation.

"These results reflect our policy of strong compliance assistance efforts alongside vigorous enforcement of the law," said U.S. Secretary of Labor Eugene Scalia.

"I am very pleased that the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs continues to achieve extraordinary success in accomplishing its critical mission of enforcing affirmative action and nondiscrimination obligations in employment," said OFCCP Director Craig E. Leen.

In FY 2020, OFCCP expanded its focused review initiative to include the Vietnam Era Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act, Promotions and Accommodations – in addition to the Section 503-focused reviews that the agency began conducting in FY 2019. A focused review is restricted to one or more components of the federal contractor's organization or one or more aspects of the contractor's employment practices. The agency publishes compliance assistance and best practices in conjunction with these reviews.

Additionally, OFCCP established the Early Resolution Procedures Program in fiscal year 2019 to facilitate earlier resolution of cases on an enterprise-wide or multi-establishment basis. Since then, this program has led to 29 Early Resolution Conciliation Agreements comprising \$47.4 million in back pay, \$4.5 million in salary adjustments, 2,071 job offers and ongoing monitoring of approximately 525,000 employees to ensure equal employment opportunity.

OFCCP is diligently working with minority-serving institutions, including Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Tribal Colleges and Universities, the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities, and the Asian Pacific Islander American Association of Colleges and Universities. The agency seeks to link these institutions with federal contractors to expand the talent pool and assist contractors in achieving their EEO goals.

The agency responded effectively to the operational challenges of working remotely and set records for compliance assistance as measured by its Help Desk inquiries and responses. In fiscal year 2020, OFCCP responded to 4,765 total inquiries, comprised of 3,477 calls and 1,288 written questions, which is a record for total responses. These results reflect a 44 percent increase over the responses that OFCCP provided to written questions in fiscal year 2019. OFCCP also published on its website opinion letters to provide guidance on the application of OFCCP regulations to fact-specific situations and answers to frequently asked questions; and launched landing webpages dedicated to specific issues, such as the misuse of prescription drugs, employment of Native and Indian American workers, and focused reviews initiative.

OFCCP enforces [Executive Order 11246](#), [Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973](#) and the [Vietnam Era Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act of 1974](#). These laws, as amended, make it illegal for contractors and subcontractors doing business with the federal government to discriminate in employment because of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, disability or status as a protected veteran. In addition, contractors and subcontractors are prohibited from discriminating against applicants or employees because they have inquired about, discussed, or disclosed their compensation or the compensation of others subject to certain limitations, and may not retaliate against applicants or employees for engaging in protected activities. These laws also require that federal contractors provide equal employment opportunity through affirmative action. For more information, please call OFCCP's toll-free helpline at 800-397-6251 or visit <https://www.dol.gov/ofccp/>.

The mission of the Department of Labor is to foster, promote and develop the welfare of the wage earners, job seekers and retirees of the United States; improve working conditions; advance opportunities for profitable employment; and assure work-related benefits and rights.

Agency: Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs

Date: October 19, 2020

Release Number: 20-1924-NAT

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US faces another summer of extreme heat as fears rise over Trump cuts

Brutal heat and drought expected to blanket country from Nevada to Florida as experts worry climate cuts will burn



📷 A Los Angeles county road crew member seeks shade from his uniform during a heat wave in 2023. Photograph: Robert Gauthier/Los Angeles Times via Getty Images

Eric Holthaus

Mon 26 May 2025 07:00 EDT

This year's summer months promise to be among the hottest on record across the United States, continuing a **worsening trend** of **extreme weather**, and amid concern over the impacts of **Trump administration** cuts to key agencies.

The **extreme heat** could be widespread and unrelenting: only far northern Alaska may escape unusually warm temperatures from June through

August, according to the latest seasonal forecast from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (Noaa).

Indeed, summer-like weather has already begun for many parts of the country.

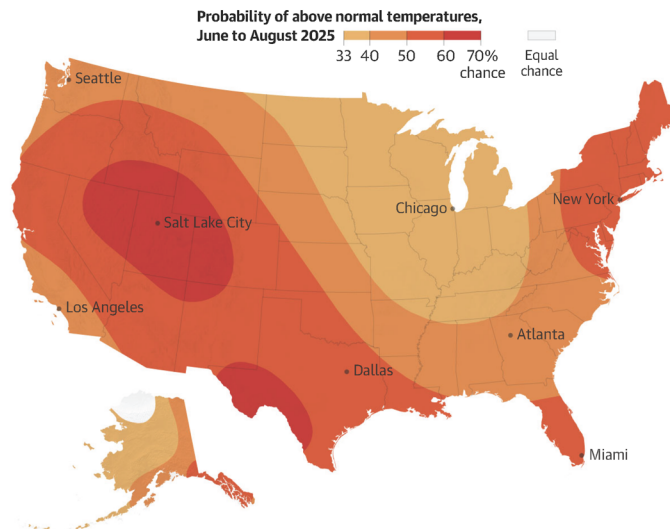
In International Falls, Minnesota - the self-proclaimed “icebox of the nation” - temperatures in the 90s arrived in early May, more than a month before the earliest previously known occurrence. A hundred miles south, the hot and dry weather helped fanned early-season wildfires burn out of control, forcing [Governor Tim Walz to call in the national guard](#).

Across the western US, [the latest Noaa update](#) reports that a lack of springtime precipitation and very warm temperatures means this winter’s ample snowpack is rapidly melting - raising the threat of summertime drought and wildfires. Drier than normal weather has also intensified ongoing drought in Florida and the mid-Atlantic states.

Meanwhile, experts fear widespread cuts to staff and reduced funding for federal science, [forecasting resources](#), and [disaster response](#) agencies will hamper efforts to keep people safe.

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US faces another summer of extreme heat as fears rise over Trump cuts | US weather | The Guardian



Guardian graphic. Source: National Weather Service. Seasonal temperature outlook issued on 15 May 2025. Forecast unavailable for Hawaii.

In Texas, where Donald Trump’s “department of government efficiency” (Doge) cuts have left the Houston office of the National Weather Service **critically understaffed** and **without any permanent leadership**, a record-setting heat **continues to intensify** and another **busy hurricane season** is looming. A **mid-May heatwave** in the Rio Grande Valley briefly made the region hotter than Death Valley.

Federal science agencies such as NOAA are now operating at reduced capacity despite the outsized weather threats. Hundreds of meteorologists **have left the National Weather Service** in recent months, and several offices, including Houston, have had to scale back the services they provide.

That’s left state and local officials, university staff and non-profits to try to take charge of public outreach on heat and other extreme weather.

Climate scientist Sylvia Dee and her colleagues at Rice University in Houston describe excessive heat as a kind of “slow violence” that compounds other

public health threats, like air pollution and preexisting health conditions. “There’s just so many things that center around heat stress.”

“Extreme heat can hijack our brain’s ability to think clearly,” said Adrienne Heinz, a clinical research psychologist at Stanford University. “Those executive functions like decision-making and inhibition and sequencing tasks, they all become harder. It becomes like walking through mud. It affects your ability to learn if you’re a student or your ability to perform if you’re an employee. It doesn’t leave anything untouched, really.”

According to NOAA, excessive heat is already the **leading cause of weather-related deaths** in the United States, and getting worse. **A 2024 study** found that the number of heat-related deaths in the US have risen 117% since 1999. For vulnerable populations, such as **migrants, prisoners or schoolchildren** in under-cooled buildings, the burden of rising temperatures is compounded.

“I feel like Houston is ground zero for climate change,” said Dee. “I think there’s some level of frustration amongst us because, you know, we have been living through these conditions for many years.”

The oppressive summer forecast continues a worrying trend fueled by global warming: across the country extreme weather has increasingly become a life-threatening emergency.

■ ■ We’re going to have more people in harm’s way. We’re very overwhelmed and trying desperately to sound the alarm
Sylvia Dee, climate scientist

“We’re going to have more people in harm’s way. The exposure of Houstonians to weather and climate disasters will only increase,” said Dee. “We’re very overwhelmed and trying desperately to sound the alarm.”

Indeed, extreme heat can have “cascading impacts” **throughout society**, said Heinz.

“These prolonged heat waves affect sleep, the cornerstone of our mental health,” said Heinz. “Our ability to weather adversity and emotionally regulate is compromised when we’re not getting good sleep.”

This year’s added political uncertainty brings questions on the ability of federal staff to predict, prepare, and respond to heat emergencies and other extreme weather, though for now, **weather forecasts continue to be issued**.

“It’s pretty scary. Summers are only getting hotter, and wildfire seasons have been getting longer and more intense for years,” said a climate scientist with the Department of Energy who wished to remain anonymous for fear of

retaliation. “These disruptions to federal science infrastructure and emergency response capacity come at the worst possible time.”

After years of [lobbying from frontline groups](#), the Biden administration instituted a [first-ever set of national guidelines](#) to protect vulnerable workers from the rising threat of extreme heat.

However, there are concerns Trump’s pick to lead workplace safety [could undo that progress](#). That means efforts to prepare and plan for this year’s weather and climate extremes will likely fall on local leaders.

Over the past year, several heat-prone cities such as [Tucson, Arizona](#), and states including [California](#) and [Nevada](#) have passed local regulations and ordinances designed to boost planning efforts to combat extreme heat.

“With the health, safety, and economic impacts of extreme weather increasing, mayors know that inaction is not an option,” said Mandy Ikert, the head of climate resilience with C40, an international group of cities working together on climate issues. “Cities are taking a broad range of approaches to help their residents stay safe during heat season, including investing in cooling centers, increased communication to residents, and new policies to make buildings and the people inside them safer.”

Even forward-thinking cities have struggled to keep up with the weather: an internal report from the city of Austin, Texas, showed that [local efforts to adapt to higher temperatures](#) have been persistently underfunded.

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My News

Why LBJ signed executive order 11246 that Trump rescinded

By Heather Timmons

January 23, 2025 9:25 AM EST • Updated January 23, 2025



President Lyndon B. Johnson talks with Martin Luther King, Jr. in the Oval Office, December 1963. via LBJ Library [Purchase Licensing Rights](#)

WASHINGTON, Jan 23 (Reuters) - When U.S. President Lyndon B. Johnson took the stage at Howard University in June of 1965, he had already signed the Civil Rights act into law, and he said he expected to sign the Voting Rights Act shortly.

The hard-fought legislation, crafted after widespread protests and demonstrations by Black Americans, was not enough, [Johnson told Howard's historically Black university's graduating class](#). He laid out the vast economic gulf between Black and white Americans and his plans to address it.

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Black poverty is not the same as white poverty, Johnson, a Democrat, said, it was also caused by "ancient brutality, past injustice and present prejudice."

President Johnson delivers the Commencement Address at Howard University in Washington, June 4, 1965. Courtesy LBJ Library [Purchase Licensing Rights](#) 

Black Americans are still "buried under a blanket of history and circumstance. It is not a lasting solution to lift just one corner of that blanket. We must stand on all sides and we must raise the entire cover if we are to liberate our fellow citizens," he said.

Rather than improving, their situation was declining by many measures, Johnson said.

Black male income had declined and unemployment risen in recent years, he noted. The unemployment rate for Black and white men was nearly equal 35 years ago, he said, but since then had become twice as high for Black men than for white. The median income of Black families dropped from 57% of what white households earned in 1952 to 53% in 1963, he said.

Frederick

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A civil rights march on Washington DC, August 28, 1963, via Library of Congress: [Purchase Licensing Rights](#) 

Johnson said he was calling a conference of scholars, government officials and Black leaders, to ensure that Black Americans "move beyond opportunity to achievement."

In September, he signed executive order 11246 forbidding employment discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion and national origin by organizations receiving federal contracting and required federal contractors to set up detailed "affirmative action" programs to make sure that was the case that are monitored by the federal government.

Trump rescinded the order late on Tuesday in a flurry of measures [aimed at repealing diversity programs](#) across the country, in a move that could have far-reaching impacts. The White House included the order's elimination under a list of measures it called "Terminating Illegal Discrimination in the Federal Government."

The rescinded order is "the federal authority underpinning affirmative action for federal contractors and subcontractors," law firm Duane Morris explained in a message to federal contractors. "The executive order represents a radical change in government policy that throws the entire existence of race and gender-based affirmative action into limbo."

The phrase "affirmative action" and much of the executive order Trump is repealing, itself built on one signed by Johnson's predecessor John F. Kennedy in March 1961, which asked government contractors to "take affirmative action" to insure employees and applicants were treated "without regard to their race, creed, color or national origin."

Trump's rescinding of a 60-year old order comes as the racial gap in median income has improved only slightly since [LBJ's 1965 speech](#). The median income of white, non-Hispanic families in 2023 was \$89,050 according to the [U.S. Census](#) , while the median income of Black households was \$56,490 - about 63% of white households'.

Reporting by Heather Timmons Editing by Tomasz Janowski

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Feedback

UK's Starmer, Qatar's emir reiterate need for Middle East de-escalation

Middle East · June 18, 2025 · 3:52 PM EDT · 2 mins ago

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer and Qatar's Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani reiterated on Wednesday the need for de-escalation in the Middle East amid the Israel-Iran conflict, a spokesperson for Starmer's office said.

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[Additional submissions from Rep. Bonamici follows:]



Inlandboatmen's Union of the Pacific

MARINE DIVISION -- INTERNATIONAL LONGSHORE & WAREHOUSE UNION
NATIONAL OFFICE • 5215 BALLARD AVE NW • SEATTLE, WA 98107 • (206) 284-6001



June 3, 2025

To whom It may concern,

As the National President of the Inlandboatmen's Union of the Pacific, I write in strong advocacy for the continued existence and funding of our National Job Corps institution. The Inlandboatmen's Union has proudly sponsored the Job Corps Maritime Program at Tongue Point in Astoria, Oregon since 1980. This program serves as a critical foundation for cultivating the next generation of skilled maritime professionals essential to our nation's economic vitality and security.

Over the years, our Job Corps school at Tongue Point has demonstrated outstanding success in training young Americans for lucrative careers in America's critically necessary maritime industry. At a time of pressing shortage of U.S. mariners, our students receive comprehensive instruction in vessel operations, navigation, maritime safety, and mechanical systems, preparing them with the technical expertise necessary to thrive in the maritime industry. The program's job placement rates are a testament to its effectiveness, with graduates securing meaningful employment, simultaneously supporting personal growth, critical economic industry, and National Security.

Our Job Corps training seamlessly integrates with the national objective to strengthen America's maritime sector. In particular, it complements President Donald Trump's advocacy for bolstering the domestic maritime industry and shipbuilding. By nurturing a well-trained workforce, the Tongue Point Maritime School directly contributes to the advancement of our shipbuilding capabilities and maritime operations, both cornerstones of our national infrastructure and defense readiness, as prioritized by President Trump.

The loss of our national Job Corps program would jeopardize the futures of countless aspiring mariners while weakening the broader maritime industry, which depends on a steady influx of skilled professionals.

I respectfully urge you to recognize the indispensable value of the Job Corps Maritime Program at Tongue Point as an example of the value present in ALL Job Corps programs across the nation. Your support in securing the continued operation of Job Corps will ensure that we maintain a robust maritime workforce capable of meeting the demands of today and the challenges of tomorrow, as well as helping other critical American industry who benefit from Job Corps graduates.

Thank you for your attention and commitment to the future of America's maritime industry.

Sincerely,

Robert Estrada
National President

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The Community Value and Life-Changing Impact of Job Corps

Building Stronger Communities Through Opportunity, Service, and Skilled Training

Job Corps is not just a training program—it is a vital community asset. The ripple effect of its presence is deeply felt in the neighborhoods, towns, and cities where its students learn, serve, and grow. The impact of removing Job Corps would go far beyond the classroom. It would touch families, strain community resources, and limit opportunities for future generations.

Community Relationships That Matter

- Job Corps students regularly volunteer and contribute to community projects—helping with landscaping, clean-ups, maintenance, and events that otherwise would cost municipalities time and money.
- These partnerships build trust between local organizations and Job Corps centers, fostering a shared mission of service and growth.
- Communities benefit directly from the work of Job Corps students, often saving thousands in labor and maintenance costs.

Impact on Local Youth and Neighborhoods

- Many students in Job Corps come from the same communities they serve—giving back through real work and setting an example for younger peers.
- Without Job Corps, at-risk youth may have fewer pathways to personal and professional success, increasing the burden on social programs and local law enforcement.
- The program offers a safe, structured environment where students can build confidence and life direction.

Character Development and Belonging

- Students learn the importance of teamwork, accountability, and public service—skills that go far beyond the jobsite.
- Belonging to Job Corps gives students a sense of pride, structure, and civic responsibility. They are part of something greater than themselves.
- The program reinforces core values like respect, integrity, and discipline.

Breaking Generational Barriers

- Graduates of Job Corps often become the first in their family to hold skilled trade jobs, earn certifications, or pursue higher education.
- The financial and emotional stability gained by graduates helps change the trajectory for entire families and future generations.

Life-Changing Skilled Trade Training

- Job Corps offers training in high-demand fields such as welding, heavy equipment operation, electrical, carpentry, and more—careers that provide immediate job opportunities and long-term stability.
- Students learn not only how to perform these trades, but how to do so safely and professionally—protecting themselves, their coworkers, and the public.
- Certifications earned through Job Corps are industry-recognized and often come at no cost to the student.

Soft Skills That Build Employability

- In addition to technical skills, students develop soft skills that employers value: punctuality, communication, problem-solving, and emotional intelligence.
- Career preparation includes resume building, interview practice, financial literacy, and conflict resolution.
- These skills are essential for lasting success in any career path.

Conclusion

Job Corps is more than a workforce development program—it is a lifeline. It transforms individuals, strengthens families, and uplifts communities. Removing it would mean more than the loss of opportunity; it would mean the loss of progress.



Our Mission is to coordinate a regional workforce system that supports individual prosperity and business competitiveness.

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June 4, 2025

The Honorable Tim Walberg
Chairman, House Committee on Education and the Workforce
U.S. House of Representatives
2266 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Robert ("Bobby") Scott
Ranking Member, House Committee on Education and the Workforce
U.S. House of Representatives
2328 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Walberg and Ranking Member Scott,

I am the owner of a real estate business in Portland, OR which is focused on providing workforce housing. Every day, I see the importance of job training in our field. Without programs to upskill people in our community there will be no way to give them the support they need to be successful.

As the Board Chair for Worksystems, the Portland Metro Workforce Development Board, I am writing in response to the President's FY26 budget proposal as you examine the policies and priorities of the Department of Labor in your House Committee on Education and Workforce hearing on Thursday, June 5.

The President's FY26 budget proposes consolidating 11 existing workforce development programs into a new 'Make America Skilled Again' (MASA) block grant. This proposal would significantly cut overall federal funding for workforce development at a time when U.S. cities require a highly skilled, trained workforce that can compete globally. To accomplish this, employers and workers are calling for more support to prepare them, not less.

Our Board's primary goal is to build a workforce system that is flexible, responsive, customer-focused, and locally managed. However, block granting and cutting these funds to states would bypass and could potentially lead to dismantling the infrastructure — including local workforce boards — that provide direct services designed to meet workers at their point of need. To ensure the long-term economic success of this country, there is nothing more important than building successful programs to support individuals in our communities in developing skills for the jobs of the future.

Local workforce boards like Worksystems are critical to this long-term success. From July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024, Worksystems served more than 25,000 people in the City of Portland, Multnomah, and Washington

Counties in Oregon — 34% of those served were low-income and needed support to enter living-wage jobs. This success is possible due to a local, targeted approach that aligns workforce training with regional employer demand and ensures anyone can access programs that lead to sustained, family-supporting employment.

Achieving these goals requires federal support, effective policy, and continued investment in innovative, locally tailored workforce systems that can adapt to changing economic conditions and labor market demands.

Business leaders of every size and industry across this country are facing an unprecedented challenge finding skilled workers to fill their open jobs. Federal workforce and adult education programs help millions of Americans build the skills required for these emerging employment opportunities, and they put people to work. These programs are of paramount importance as we work to secure the nation's continued economic growth. A dramatic reduction in funding, coupled with the elimination of the workforce infrastructure that delivers services at the local level, would undermine the very outcomes we are trying to achieve.

Helping employers secure the highly skilled workforce they need, and putting Americans to work is not a partisan issue. We greatly appreciate your bi-partisan and bi-cameral cooperation to ensure that these critical programs and infrastructure receive the support they need to secure the nation's continued economic growth.

Sincerely,



James Paulson
Board Chair, Worksystems
Paulsonjames8@gmail.com

--

cc:

The Honorable Suzanne Bonamici
Member, House Committee on Education and the Workforce
U.S. House of Representatives
2231 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

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[Additional submissions from Ranking Member Scott follows:]

**STATEMENT OF CRAIG E. LEEN
DIRECTOR
OFFICE OF FEDERAL CONTRACT COMPLIANCE PROGRAMS
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR**

**BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON CIVIL RIGHTS AND HUMAN SERVICES
COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND LABOR
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

September 19, 2019

Chairwoman Bonamici, Ranking Member Comer, and members of the Subcommittee:

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify about the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP) and the critical work we do to enforce three equal employment opportunity authorities: Executive Order 11246, as amended (Executive Order); Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, 29 U.S.C. 793 (Section 503); and the Vietnam Era Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act of 1974, as amended, 38 U.S.C. 4212 (VEVRAA).

Collectively, these authorities prohibit federal contractors and subcontractors from discriminating in employment because of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, disability, or status as a protected veteran. In addition, contractors and subcontractors are prohibited from discriminating against applicants or employees because they inquire about, discuss, or disclose their compensation or that of others, subject to certain limitations.

OFCCP has jurisdiction over approximately 120,000 contractor establishments and 25,000 firms or parent companies. Given the large size of the contractor and subcontractor population, OFCCP can only evaluate some of them each year. OFCCP carries out the vast majority of its work through neutrally scheduled compliance evaluations, complaint investigations, and proactive compliance assistance and education to contractors. As a result, OFCCP is implementing a comprehensive strategy that promotes compliance for all contractors through enforcement, compliance assistance efforts, compliance verification, and compliance incentives.

1. OFCCP's Four Guiding Principles

Under this Administration, OFCCP developed four principles to guide agency strategies and activities to support a broader compliance strategy and promote compliance across the entire contractor community. These principles support OFCCP in working with federal contractors and subcontractors to ensure full compliance with its civil rights laws, while at the same time requiring contractors in violation of the law to remedy and correct the violation.

- **Certainty** – OFCCP believes it is essential to provide clear and certain guidelines consistent with the rule of law. Certainty ensures that contractors know what OFCCP expects of them so that they can comply. OFCCP provides clear guidance and in return expects cooperation and access in compliance evaluations when it seeks compliance verification.
- **Efficiency** – OFCCP aims to greatly reduce the time it takes to complete compliance evaluations and to process compliance decisions more efficiently. An unduly lengthy compliance evaluation process hurts both employees and employers, as it leaves evaluations open indefinitely without closure, conciliation, or remedies, and the uncertainty that comes with a prolonged audit despite the lack of a clear finding of wrongdoing. For Fiscal Year 2019, my first full year as Director, I am proud to report that OFCCP has completed non-monetary compliance evaluations (*i.e.*, a compliance review in which OFCCP finds no violation that would require a contractor to provide monetary make whole relief) within an average of 318 days, down from an average of 419 days for Fiscal Year 2016 . The agency has reduced the time undertaken for desk audit—the first step in the compliance review process in which OFCCP reviews information and data submitted by the contractor—to 42 days (a reduction of over 70% in less than a year), and is aiming to reduce the current average of five years the agency takes to complete monetary evaluations (*i.e.*, an evaluation that requires the contractor to provide monetary make whole relief, such as lost wages or benefits). In prioritizing the prompt completion of evaluations and in accordance with numerous recommendations made by the Government Accountability Office¹, the agency will be better able to provide efficiency and transparency to the contractor community without sacrificing the thoroughness and quality of evaluations. As compliance is best achieved through a mutual dedication on the part of contractors and OFCCP, prompt completion of evaluations greatly depends on contractor cooperation.
- **Recognition** – OFCCP has announced and is developing incentive programs to recognize high performing contractors, those that go above-and-beyond the requirements of law, for their innovation and success in equal employment opportunity programs. These contractors serve as mentors to their peers. By recognizing best practices, encouraging innovative programs, and supporting peer mentorship, OFCCP will continue facilitating the ability of contractors to increase equal employment opportunities throughout the United States.
- **Transparency** – OFCCP is committed to transparency in its mission, policies, and practices. Transparency is the foundation of a relationship of respect, dialogue, and feedback between OFCCP and its stakeholders that helps the agency improve effectiveness in both compliance assistance and enforcement. Transparency also improves operational consistency and efficiency within the agency, allowing for a more collaborative and efficient approach to compliance evaluations. Furthermore, a

¹ GAO Diversity in the Technology Sector 18-69 Report “Federal Agencies Could Improve Oversight of Equal Employment Opportunity Requirements” (<https://www.gao.gov/assets/690/688460.pdf>) and GAO Equal Employment Opportunity 16-750 Report, “Strengthening Oversight Could Improve Federal Contractor Nondiscrimination Compliance” (<https://www.gao.gov/assets/680/679960.pdf>).

culture of transparency supports contractors' ability to conduct meaningful self-audits that proactively identify and address issues with their employment practices. OFCCP will continue to ensure transparency by maintaining open communication and cooperation with contractors and by minimizing unnecessary burdens through the completion of high quality, efficient compliance evaluations. The agency will also expend considerable effort to resolve violations through conciliation, but will stand ready to vigorously pursue litigation when necessary.

2. OFCCP Record 2-Year Period of Recoveries

The combination of proactive compliance assistance and effective enforcement works hand in hand. Indeed, in the first two years of the present administration, OFCCP recovered more than double the amount of back pay owed to workers and applicants than was collected over the prior two-year period. The first two calendar years of the Trump Administration was the highest two year period for monetary recovery in the history of the agency (\$45M: CY 2017 – 2018) – nearly double any two years in the Obama administration (\$25M: any two years).

3. Major Initiatives

OFCCP expects that the numerous strategies and initiatives it has rolled out over the past two years, including regulatory reform, proposed in FY 2019, will yield improved results and performance in FY 2020. These strategies and initiatives will advance the efficiency of OFCCP's enforcement and compliance activities while reaching the broadest number of workers. These strategies and initiatives promote compliance across the entire contractor community through enforcement, compliance assistance efforts, compliance verification, and compliance incentives.

a. Regulatory Reform

- In FY 2019, OFCCP published a notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM) to implement legal requirements regarding the exemption for religious organizations (*Implementing Legal Requirements Regarding the Equal Opportunity Clause's Religious-Organization Exemption*). This exemption commits the federal government to respecting the sincerely-held religious beliefs of organizations that contract with the federal government, ensuring that conscience and religious freedom rights are recognized and protected. Besides ensuring that OFCCP regulations are in line with religious exemptions in other federal civil rights laws, recent Supreme Court rulings, and executive orders, protecting conscience and religious freedom rights will lead to a better functioning federal contracting market by encouraging greater participation.
- In FY 2020, OFCCP anticipates publishing an NPRM that would include limiting and otherwise altering the obligations of TRICARE providers covered by OFCCP's authorities. (*Affirmative Action and Nondiscrimination Obligations of Federal Contractors and Subcontractors: TRICARE and Certain Other Healthcare Providers*). This proposed rule will offer beneficial clarification that will improve the health of active service members and veterans and their families. OFCCP is concerned that health care providers are increasingly unwilling to accept federal contracts due to the regulatory

burden they expect to incur – which may result in active service members and veterans and their families having difficulty accessing health care services.

- In FY 2020, OFCCP anticipates publishing an NPRM entitled *Nondiscrimination Obligations of Federal Contractors and Subcontractors: Procedures to Resolve Potential Employment Discrimination* to codify existing procedures that OFCCP uses to resolve potential employment discrimination. This rule will increase clarity and ensure certainty for OFCCP's stakeholders, and enhance the agency's efficiency in remediating employment discrimination.

b. Increased Compliance Evaluations and Efficient Resolution

In FY 2019, OFCCP replaced the agency's Active Case Enforcement (ACE) procedures, which established procedures to replace abbreviated desk audits with full desk audits, with new procedures. These new procedures emphasize that compliance reviews will be governed by OFCCP's Federal Contract Compliance Manual (FCCM) and other directives and initiatives that shorten full desk audits and conciliate violations more efficiently. As a result, OFCCP is expecting to complete 1,500 compliance evaluations in FY 2020, and substantially increase the number of compliance evaluations it conducts annually to 3,000 in FY 2021.

- OFCCP replaced Directive 307 with Directive 2018-05 (Compensation Directive), which provides greater transparency and certainty for contractors by clarifying in a step-by-step manner OFCCP's approach and method for compensation system evaluations. Contractors know to proactively use Pay Analysis Groups (PAGs) in accordance with principles indicated by OFCCP. If contractors apply these principles and create reasonable and sufficiently large PAGs, OFCCP will conduct its analysis using these contractor-provided PAGs, providing much greater certainty for contractors and encouraging proactive compliance that will benefit workers. OFCCP is also prioritizing enforcement matters where there is both statistical and non-statistical evidence of discrimination. [See Directive 2018-05.](#)
- In addition to the compliance reviews OFCCP typically conducts, OFCCP is conducting focused reviews and compliance checks. Focused reviews and compliance checks are types of compliance evaluations that allow OFCCP to target its review toward a specific part of a contractor's compliance. This focus allows for the reviews to conclude swiftly, resulting in cost savings and quicker remedy. In FY 2019, OFCCP is conducting focused reviews for Section 503, and in FY 2020, the agency will conduct focused reviews for VEVRAA and promotion data under the provisions and corresponding regulations of Executive Order 11246. [See Directive 2018-04.](#)
- In FY 2019, OFCCP implemented Early Resolution Procedures (ERP), an initiative that allows OFCCP and contractors with multiple establishments to cooperatively develop corporate-wide compliance with OFCCP's requirements, reducing the length of compliance evaluations through early and efficient resolutions. The efficiency of this program could greatly increase OFCCP's capacity to conduct a greater number of compliance evaluations. [See Directive 2019-02.](#)

- OFCCP has also announced and is in the process of implementing the Voluntary Enterprise-wide Review Program (VERP) which enables the agency to blend its compliance evaluation and compliance assistance activities to work with high-performing contractors toward the mutual goal of sustained, enterprise-wide (corporate-wide) compliance outside of OFCCP's neutral establishment-based scheduling process. VERP is responsive to the Government Accountability Office's (GAO) recommendation for OFCCP to make requisite "changes to the contractor scheduling list development process" so as to focus its enforcement resources "on those contractors with the greatest risk of not following equal employment opportunity and affirmative action requirements." [See GAO Report, "Strengthening Oversight Could Improve Federal Contractor Nondiscrimination Compliance," September 22, 2016.](#) By closely following the GAO's recommendations, OFCCP anticipates more program efficiency, increased findings of violations, and remedies for more workers harmed by discrimination. [See Directive 2019-04.](#)
- In support of the PMA IT Modernization Goal and in response to GAO's recommendation to "develop a mechanism to monitor Affirmative Action Plans (AAP) from covered federal contractors on a regular basis," OFCCP is reviewing how better to ensure that contractors are complying with their AAP obligations. OFCCP is considering a contractor certification mechanism, technology solutions to facilitate AAP compliance, and adjustments to our scheduling and review processes. [See Directive 2018-07.](#)
- OFCCP has many compliance evaluations that take over a year, and a number that take over five years. This hurts employers and employees, as it leaves cases open indefinitely without closure, conciliation, or remedy. This is especially troublesome in cases where no discrimination has been found. OFCCP typically defines an aged case as one that has been open for two or more years. In FY 2019, OFCCP implemented an aged case initiative to significantly reduce the age case rate from the current level of 20% (30% in 2017) to 10% or lower. OFCCP will accomplish its age case rate reduction goals by bringing to resolution cases that are four or more years old. OFCCP will endeavor to promptly resolve or refer to the appropriate agency those aged cases with specific findings attached. For those aged cases with no specific findings, staff will conduct a final review and make a timely determination whether to proceed with or close the case. This policy will best prevent any harm inflicted by holding a company to an audit for months or years on end without any specific findings of wrongdoing. Similarly, our policy of prompt resolution or referral for those cases with specific findings will provide a timely remedy to those workers who have suffered harm. In addition to addressing the issue of aged cases, OFCCP has also revised its procedures such that the time for completing desk audits in newly opened reviews has dramatically improved. Average desk audit times have dropped from 154 day prior to the 9/19/18 transparency directive to 42 days—a reduction of over 70% in less than a year. [See Directive 2018-08.](#)

c. Compliance Assistance and Contractor Education

OFCCP uses contractor education and compliance assistance as vehicles to reach out to a wider array of contractors and establish a culture of self-compliance. In FY 2019, OFCCP implemented

several compliance assistance initiatives to educate contractors about their legal obligations and to provide technical assistance so that they understand applicable laws and strive for self-compliance.

- OFCCP issued several directives and responses to Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) addressing a wide variety of issues in order to facilitate contractor compliance.
- OFCCP hired an ombudsman to improve transparency in OFCCP compliance evaluation and assistance activities. The ombudsman will improve the efficiency and effectiveness of internal OFCCP operations by providing an independent perspective and improving communication between external stakeholders and OFCCP regional and district offices as necessary. [See Directive 2018-09.](#)
- Recently, OFCCP has joined a decades-long tradition at the Department of Labor by issuing its first opinion letters. Opinion letters provide fact-specific guidance to employers and employees to provide more certainty and clarity about how OFCCP exercises its regulatory authority.
- To further assist contractors, OFCCP expanded the services offered through its Help Desk – which provides compliance assistance to individual callers and inquirers. In FY 2019, OFCCP implemented its Contractor Assistance Portal (CAP). This portal is a place where federal contractors can find answers to questions about their obligations under OFCCP's laws. OFCCP uses the portal to support contractors on their path to compliance, create a new contractor knowledge base, and deliver compliance assistance. Through this portal, contractors can dynamically search existing responses to frequently asked questions, review questions posted by other federal contractors, and post questions to an OFCCP expert. [See Directive 2019-03.](#)
- To further support contractors in their ongoing efforts to ensure equal employment opportunities, in FY 2019, OFCCP began developing a cloud-based learning management system (LMS) to deliver contractor training using a blended methodology (virtual webinars, self-paced learning, and online learning). LMS will ensure efficiency in the use of resources and promote accessibility for all contractors regulated by OFCCP. In FY 2020, OFCCP plans to launch the Contractor Compliance Institute, its virtual training program for federal contractors. The Contractor Compliance Institute will enable OFCCP to provide clearer compliance assistance and guidance so as to better help contractors understand their requirements, thus decreasing contractor noncompliance and increasing the effectiveness of the agency in carrying out its mission.
- OFCCP is updating and making its Federal Contract Compliance Manual more accessible on the agency's website. This effort not only supports OFCCP's transparency initiative, but also increases the efficiency of OFCCP's compliance evaluations and improves the consistency of OFCCP's enforcement and compliance assistance efforts.

4. Focused Reviews

One of OFCCP's primary initiatives this year is focused reviews. The agency issued Directive 2018-04 on August 10, 2018, requiring that a portion of future scheduling lists include focused reviews for each of the three authorities that the OFCCP enforces –Executive Order 11246, Section 503, and VEVRAA. [See Directive 2018-04.](#)

a. Section 503

- The agency began this initiative by scheduling 500 Section 503 focused reviews at federal contractor corporate headquarters.
- Section 503 prohibits federal contractors and subcontractors from discriminating against employees and applicants on the basis of disability, and requires these employers to take affirmative action to recruit, hire, promote, compensate, and retain qualified individuals with disabilities.
- Numerous troubling statistics show why a focus on disability inclusion should be a top priority for OFCCP.
 - The labor participation rate for individuals with disabilities is approximately 20%, less than a third of the general labor participation rate.
 - The unemployment rate for individuals with disabilities is more than double that of the general unemployment rate and has been so for the past several years.
 - A wage gap exists for individuals with disabilities that is by some measures 30 cents or more on the dollar less than that of individuals without disabilities.
 - Compared with people without disabilities, earning inequalities for people with disabilities translate into lower pay and higher poverty rates.
- OFCCP created a Section 503 messaging campaign to announce the new Focused Review landing page, which highlighted Directive 2018-04, best practices, stakeholder resources, responses to FAQs, and other guidance to assist federal contractors. See landing page at <https://www.dol.gov/ofccp/Section503-FocusedReviews/>.
 - OFCCP worked closely with the Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) in developing its leading Section 503 best practices and stakeholder resources, consisting of:
 - A Centralized Accommodation System;
 - Accessible Online Recruiting Tools;
 - CEO Leadership through Correspondence and Video;
 - Coordination with State or Local Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies;
 - A Comprehensive and Welcoming Self-Id Program;
 - Disability Inclusion Programs;
 - Employee Resource Groups; and
 - A Chief Accessibility Officer.
- OFCCP offered extensive compliance assistance to federal contractors nationwide via town hall sessions, agency presentations, direct requests, and other forms of

correspondence. Town hall sessions allow stakeholders to pose questions and make recommendations to OFCCP officials and will continue throughout the course of the fiscal year while the focused reviews are ongoing.

- OFCCP developed comprehensive Section 503 focused review training for OFCCP staff and delivered external Section 503 focused review federal contractor training on September 11, 2019.
- OFCCP is rolling out Section 503 onsite focused reviews in the fall, with an online forum made available to contractors wishing to submit inquiries on September 6, 2019. The agency will launch a series of disability events agency-wide in October.
- A small trained National Office team will participate in a sample set of Section 503 focused reviews in listening mode only to gather and collect information to assist with identifying additional best practices and the development of training and compliance assistance, including a technical assistance guide for stakeholders. During these focused reviews, OFCCP goes onsite and conducts a comprehensive review of the particular authority at issue. For example, in a Section 503 focused review, the compliance officer reviews policies and practices of the contractor related solely to Section 503 compliance. The review includes interviews with managers responsible for equal employment opportunity and Section 503 compliance (such as the ADA coordinator) as well as employees affected by those policies.
- OFCCP is also making the President's initiatives on mental health a material part of its focused reviews. Specifically, OFCCP is focusing on best practices that highlight training resources, accommodation policies, psychiatric treatment, counseling services, suicide prevention hotlines, mental health and wellness campaigns, etc., as it relates to promoting equal employment opportunity for individuals with disabilities. OFCCP intends to provide further information on these issues on its landing page by the end of FY 2019.
- In FY 2019, OFCCP launched the Excellence in Disability Inclusion Award Program, a joint initiative between OFCCP and ODEP, to annually recognize companies not only embracing their obligations under Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act, but exemplifying best practices for disability inclusion. The application period for this award closes on November 1, 2019.

b. VEVRAA/Executive Order 11246

- The agency intends to issue a scheduling list of 500 VEVRAA focused reviews at federal contractor corporate headquarters in early FY2020.
- VEVRAA prohibits federal contractors and subcontractors from discriminating against employees and applicants on the basis of protected veteran status, and requires these employers to take affirmative action to recruit, hire, promote, compensate, and retain qualified protected veterans.

- In honor of Veterans' Day, OFCCP will issue its first VEVRAA focused review supplemental scheduling list in November 2019 and launch a series of VEVRAA focused events. OFCCP's VEVRAA focused reviews will focus on protected veterans, spouses of protected veterans, and protected veterans with disabilities.
- OFCCP will partner with DOL's Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS) to identify best practices and contractor resources, develop a VEVRAA focused review landing page, and offer training and compliance assistance.
- In preparation for the VEVRAA focused reviews, OFCCP held a VEVRAA/Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) town hall (in collaboration with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and VETS) on August 7, 2019, allowing the contractor community to pose questions to officials, as well as interact with others in breakout sessions. Participating individuals provided recommendations for OFCCP that it will consider integrating into its VEVRAA focused reviews.
- In FY 2020, OFCCP will use the same framework to roll out the Executive Order 11246 focused reviews, which will primarily focus on promotions for women to executive level positions within the workplace.

In Conclusion

The United States Department of Labor is committed to preserving the American dream. No American should suffer unlawful discrimination, and every American should be free to work hard and advance on merit without unlawful discrimination.

OFCCP collaborates with federal contractors and subcontractors who seek in good faith to achieve full compliance with their affirmative obligations. Conversely, OFCCP will continue to pursue vigorous enforcement against those contractors who fail to ensure equality of opportunity. This approach has, we believe, reduced discrimination and furthered OFCCP's mission—ensuring contractors' comprehensive and proactive compliance with civil rights requirements and the rule of law.



March 11, 2025

The Honorable Lori Chavez-DeRemer
Secretary
U.S. Department of Labor

Subject: Importance of Bureau of International Labor Affairs to the U.S. Apparel, Footwear, & Accessories Industry

Secretary Chavez-DeRemer:

The American Apparel & Footwear Association (AAFA) and the Fair Labor Association (FLA), on behalf of the hundreds of American brands and retailers we represent, congratulate you on your confirmation as Secretary of Labor. We also congratulate you on your strong and demonstrated commitment to protecting and promoting American workers. As part of your longstanding dedication to protecting American workers, we urge you to fully preserve and promote the Department's Bureau of International Labor Affairs (ILAB) and its programs to defend workers.

While 97% of all clothes, shoes, and accessories sold in the United States are imported, our industry directly employs 3.5 million American workers in good-paying jobs, in design, R&D, compliance, logistics, marketing, retail, and, yes, manufacturing. We rely on the essential work of ILAB, whose purpose is to work globally to ensure a level playing field for American workers. ILAB's work reflects the values of the American people as it furthers the interest of American workers and American businesses.

ILAB works to build institutions in countries around the world so that they can effectively protect their workers, raising labor standards, including eliminating child labor and forced labor and promoting freedom of association and collective bargaining. ILAB provides training to workers so they know their rights and how to defend them. ILAB deploys labor attachés to U.S. embassies in key countries to provide real time intelligence, contacts, and solutions to promote and protect workers. ILAB enforces the labor provisions in trade agreements to ensure a level playing field for American workers. And finally, ILAB is a critical funder and manager of the International Labor Organization's (ILO) Better Work program, which establishes strong labor enforcement and transparency in key countries around the world.

ILAB's partnership with our industry helps protect and promote workers' rights, freedom of association, and collective bargaining in every country from which we source, which in turn provides a stable business environment for American businesses, protects our 3.5 million American workers, levels the playing field for American manufacturers and American workers, and, through ILAB's extensive work under the U.S./Mexico/Canada Agreement (USMCA) and the U.S./Central America-Dominican Republic Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA-DR), promotes the success of these agreements, which require the use of U.S.-grown cotton and U.S.-made textiles.

Therefore, we again urge you to preserve, protect, and promote the Bureau of International Labor Affairs and its programs. ILAB is a good friend and important partner to both American workers and American business, as demonstrated by the strong support ILAB receives from both the AFL-CIO and American industry.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter. Please contact Nate Herman at nherman@aafaglobal.org or Shelly Han at shan@fairlabor.org if you have any questions or would like additional information.

Sincerely,



Steve Lamar
President & CEO
American Apparel & Footwear Association (AAFA)



Jeff Vockrodt
President and CEO
Fair Labor Association (FLA)

March 25, 2025

The Honorable Lori Chavez-DeRemer
Secretary
U.S. Department of Labor

Subject: Recission of Bureau of International Labor Affairs (ILAB) Uzbekistan Cotton Project

Dear Secretary Chavez-DeReemer,

The undersigned organizations have grave concerns with the recent decision to eliminate the Department's Bureau of International Labor Affairs (ILAB) project titled "[Enhancing Transparency and Accountability of Uzbekistan's Cotton Industry](#)".

We are members of the [Cotton Campaign](#), which is a unique coalition bringing business and labor together to end the use of forced labor and other labor abuses in the cotton sectors of Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. This unprecedented coalition brings together the American Apparel & Footwear Association (AAFA) and the U.S. Fashion Industry Association (USFIA), which represent thousands of American brands and retailers and millions of American workers, with organizations that promote worker rights, human rights and responsible supply chains.

The ILAB Uzbek cotton project complements the Cotton Campaign's work by building capacity and promoting compliance to ensure that farmers and workers in Uzbekistan's cotton industry have basic rights, crucial to fair and resilient supply chains. The ILAB Uzbek cotton project puts America first by protecting the interests of American workers and businesses. It ensures that American cotton and American businesses are competing on a level playing field, not competing against Uzbek cotton produced under unsafe and inhumane conditions or against unscrupulous textile and apparel companies that take advantage of that. The ILAB project also puts American workers first by making sure they are competing against workers who have similar rights and protections.

Eliminating this project, on the other hand, sets America back, enabling Uzbek cotton to undercut U.S. cotton and American farmers, forcing American workers to compete against forced labor and unsavory labor practices, and enabling dodgy textile and apparel companies to benefit from unfair trade practices, leading to a huge competitive advantage over U.S. businesses for one of the biggest materials used in clothes.

For these reasons, we urge you to immediately reinstate ILAB's Uzbek cotton project.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this important matter. Please contact American Apparel & Footwear Association's [Nate Herman](#) if you have any questions or there is any additional information we can provide to you.

Sincerely,

American Apparel & Footwear Association
U.S. Fashion Industry Association
Responsible Sourcing Network
Anti-Slavery International
Uzbek Forum for Human Rights

Child Labor Coalition
National Consumers League



Priceless: The Over \$5.6 Billion Impact of Equal Opportunity at Work

FEBRUARY 2025

by Brittany Williams

Just off the heels of the [Equal Pay Act of 1963](#), which outlawed unequal pay on the basis of sex, 1964 was a landmark year during which civil rights leaders witnessed the culmination of centuries of resilience, ambition, perseverance and commitment to equality come to fruition. 1964 was one of the nation's most monumental years, marked by some inspiring moments, such as peaceful [sit-ins and protests](#) across the nation calling for integration, and some harrowing ones, from the tragic [murder of civil rights activists](#) (by the [terrorist organization](#) – the Ku Klux Klan), to rallies held in former [slave markets](#) and [public streets](#).

That summer, Congress passed the Civil Rights Act of 1964, dawning an era of equality for more people: women and men, people of color, those of diverse faiths and countries of origin. The law also served as an attempt to remedy those past, unfathomable injustices. Within the Civil Rights Act sits Title VII, which made employment discrimination on the basis of race, sex, color, religion and national origin illegal. While momentous, the expansion of legal rights still did not extend to all – specifically disabled people and LGBTQ+ persons.

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 also established the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), a five-member, bipartisan commission with the mission to eliminate unlawful employment discrimination for workers. The EEOC's key responsibility is enforcing federal laws that make it illegal to discriminate against a job applicant or an employee because of the person's:

- | | |
|-------------|------------------------|
| 1. Race | 5. National Origin |
| 2. Color | 6. Age (40 or older) |
| 3. Religion | 7. Disability |
| 4. Sex | 8. Genetic Information |

Throughout its 60-year existence, the EEOC has supported thousands of workers who have suffered unlawful workplace discrimination by advocating on their behalf and obtaining monetary relief for those victims.

1. The EEOC has recovered billions for workers who have suffered discrimination

From 2014-2024, the EEOC recovered \$5.6 billion for workers who were discriminated against.¹ In fiscal year 2024, the EEOC:

- Recovered nearly **\$700 million** for victims of discrimination, including:
 - Approximately **\$496.6 million for 13,516 victims** of employment discrimination in the private sector and state and local government workplaces through mediation, conciliation and settlements;
 - More than **\$190 million** for 3,041 federal employees and applicants;
 - Over **\$40 million** for 4,304 individuals as a direct result of litigation.
- Brought **88,531 new discrimination charges** and addressed inquiries from:
 - More than 553,000 calls to the agency's contact center
 - 90,000 emails
- Filed **111 new lawsuits**, including:
 - 76 suits on behalf of individuals
 - 13 systemic suits involving multiple victims or discriminatory policies
- Resolved 132 lawsuits and achieved **favorable results** such as reaching a settlement agreement or via consent decree, **in 97% of all suit resolutions**

At the same time that the EEOC first opened its doors, President Johnson issued Executive Order 11246, which prohibited employment discrimination by organizations that receive federal contracts and subcontracts and has been expanded to prohibit discrimination based on sex, including sexual orientation, gender identity, and pregnancy. The Secretary of the Department of Labor established the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP) to enforce EO 11246, and, in subsequent years, OFCCP's mandate was expanded by Congress to also enforce the following:

- Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which prohibits federal contractors and subcontractors from discriminating against individuals with disabilities.
- Vietnam Era Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act of 1974, which prohibits federal contractors and subcontractors from discriminating against veterans and requires employers take action to recruit, hire, promote, and retain veterans.

¹ Calculated by the National Partnership for Women & Families

Combined with Executive Order 11246, these laws outlaw discrimination in employment based on race, color, religion, national origin, sex (including sexual orientation, gender identity and pregnancy) disability, and veteran status.

Today, OFCCP has jurisdiction over approximately [25,000 firms](#), where 20% of the American workforce are employed. In contrast to the EEOC, the OFCCP has the ability to conduct more comprehensive, systematic reviews of pay inequities, allowing the agency to detect patterns of discrimination that individual employees may not otherwise detect.

2. Over the last decade, the OFCCP has worked fervently to recover monetary relief for employees and job seekers of federal contractors who were discriminated against.

From 2014 to 2024, the OFCCP has:²

- Obtained **over \$260.8 million** for employees and job seekers who were discriminated against
- Obtained financial relief for **over 250,900** employees and job seekers
- Secured **over 22,600** job opportunities and salary adjustments for individuals who had suffered discrimination

In 2020, Wells Fargo Bank entered into a [conciliation agreement](#) with the OFCCP in which the bank agreed to pay **\$7,800,000** in back wages and interest to resolve allegations of hiring discrimination. The OFCCP alleged that Wells Fargo discriminated against over 30,000 African American applicants for banking, customer sales and service, and administrative support positions at locations nationwide and 308 female applicants for administrative support positions.

In 2019, the OFCCP entered into a [conciliation agreement](#) with Dell Technologies to resolve allegations of race and gender-based wage discrimination. Under the terms of the agreement, Dell Technologies provided relief to the affected workers totaling **\$7 million** in lost wages, interest, and benefits.

Two years prior, in 2017 the OFCCP entered into a [consent decree](#) with Palantir Technologies Inc. to resolve charges of systemic hiring discrimination. The decree settles allegations that Palantir Technologies discriminated against Asian applicants in the hiring and selection process for engineering positions. Under the terms of the decree, Palantir paid **\$1,659,434** in back wages to the affected class and extended job offers to eight eligible class members.

The OFCCP has been essential to the resolution and remedying of workplace discrimination across the nation. In addition to recovery efforts for workers, the OFCCP also served as a

² This information has since been removed from the Department of Labor's website and is on file with the National Partnership for Women & Families.

watchdog for employment discrimination. The OFCCP has used annual audits to ensure that companies who work with the federal government are complying with equal opportunity laws. Last year, the OFCCP published its Corporate Scheduling Announcement list, and of the 500 companies listed, a few [notable names](#) were selected for the OFCCP's employment discrimination audits: Amazon, Google and Tesla.

3. Without these agencies, victims of workplace discrimination are left without the necessary tools that help eliminate discrimination.

While most businesses do foster supportive and inclusive workplaces, the data also makes it clear that a number of businesses do and will continue to engage in illegal discrimination. There is no question that the EEOC and the OFCCP have been instrumental in preventing and remedying discrimination in the workplace for all workers over decades. Both the EEOC and OFCCP have demonstrated their necessity and value – they are and have always been essential to protecting workers from gross, unlawful and cruel discrimination. All workers deserve to thrive in their workplaces, regardless of their race, gender, disability, veteran status, and more.

Credits: Author would like to thank Gail Zuagar, Sharita Gruberg, Udochi Onwubiko, Isabella Long, Jessica Mason and Mettabel Law for their contributions.



April 14, 2025

The Honorable Lori M. Chavez-DeRemer
 Secretary of Labor
 U. S. Department of Labor
 200 Constitution Ave NW
 Washington, DC. 20210

Dear Secretary Chavez-DeRemer:

We write to urge you to preserve staffing levels and field offices at the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP) to ensure disabled workers and veterans remain protected against discrimination.

Federal contract workers—who make up more than 20 percent of this country's workforce—rely on the experience and expertise of federal enforcers at OFCCP to effectively enforce anti-discrimination and equal employment requirements under the Vietnam Era Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act of 1974 (VEVRAA) and Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

But effective enforcement requires robust staffing levels in the agency's D.C. office and across its more than 50 field offices. OFCCP staff in field offices respond to workers' complaints and conduct proactive review for compliance to help ensure that taxpayer-funded federal contractors are not illegally discriminating against workers. OFCCP staff also provide compliance assistance to arm contractors with tools and resources to comply with the law and prevent discrimination before it happens. Without adequate OFCCP staff levels and field presence, federal contract workers will become more vulnerable to discrimination that could cost them equal pay, a promotion, or even a job.

Adequate staffing levels and field presence has proved critical to the Trump Administration in the past. For example, during the previous Trump Administration, OFCCP conducted Section 503 and VEVRAA focused [compliance reviews](#) that required on-site interviews. This work would not have been possible without a sufficient field

presence and staffing levels.

American workers deserve a level playing field that provides them the opportunity to succeed on their merits. We urge you to preserve the OFCCP's capacity to promote equal opportunity in employment for federal contract workers.

Sincerely,

Latifa Lyles, Women's Bureau Director
(2012-2017)

A Better Balance

Access Ready Inc.

American Association of University
Women (AAUW)

American Civil Liberties Union

Asset Building Strategies

Association of People Supporting
Employment First (APSE)

Autistic Self Advocacy Network (ASAN)

Better Life Lab at New America

Center for Economic and Policy
Research

Clearinghouse on Women's Issues

CMoWIT - Central Missouri Women in
Trades

Coalition on Human Needs

Economic Policy Institute

Equal Rights Advocates

Equity Works

Feminist Majority Foundation

IUOE

IUPAT Local 61

Just Solutions

LCLAA

Legal Momentum

Main Street Alliance

Maine Women's Lobby

MANA, A National Latina Organization

MomsRising

National Center for Law and Economic
Justice

National Coalition on Black Civic
Participation/Black Women's
Roundtable

National Council of Jewish Women

National Disabled Legal Professionals
Association

National Employment Law Project

National Organization for Women

National Partnership for Women and Families

National Taskforce on Tradeswomen's Issues

National Women's Law Center

National Writers Union

Operating Engineers Local 3

PowHer New York

REAL Women in Trucking, Inc.

Sandkamp Woodworks LLC

Service Employees International Union (SEIU)

Shriver Center on Poverty Law

The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights

The Women's Legal Defense and Education Fund

Women Employed

Women in Non Traditional Employment Roles



House Education and the Workforce Committee

"Examining the Policies and Priorities of the Department of Labor"

National Women's Law Center and National Partnership for Women & Families

119th Congress

On behalf of the National Women's Law Center (NWLC) and the National Partnership for Women & Families (NPWF), organizations that have advocated on behalf of the civil rights of women and girls for over fifty years, we write regarding our deep concerns about recent and proposed policies and priorities of the Trump Department of Labor (DOL), which are devastating to women workers and their families. The Department of Labor oversees a number of laws vital to women's economic security and the right to be free from workplace discrimination, such as the Fair Labor Standards Act¹, the Occupational Safety and Health Act, and the Family and Medical Leave Act. These laws are essential to ensuring women have the ability to fully participate in the workplace and to closing the gender wage gap: they remove barriers to women's employment opportunity; protect against pay discrimination; allow women to meet caregiving responsibilities without sacrificing their employment; and protect women's health and safety so they can continue to support their families. Yet just four months into this administration, the Trump Department of Labor has already taken actions that eliminate worker protections, reduce equal employment opportunities, attack key civil rights protections, inhibit worker power and reinforce occupational segregation to the detriment of women, workers of color, LGBTQI+ workers, workers with disabilities, and all workers throughout the country. The situation facing America's workers is alarming.

A strong and effective DOL is urgently needed given the economic uncertainty facing many women workers in the United States. Despite the extremely valuable role that women play in our economy, they continue to face barriers and discrimination in the workplace. Women are overwhelmingly the essential but underpaid workers who care for children and seniors, staff grocery stores and hotels, clean homes and offices, and more—typically for less than \$15 per

¹ Including the PUMP Act for Nursing Mothers (Pump Act).

hour.² In fact, women working full time, year-round typically are paid just 83 cents for every dollar paid to their male counterparts—a gap that increased in 2023 for the first time in two decades.³ This gap is even wider for many women of color, disabled women, and mothers.⁴ And women continue to lag behind men in jobs gained in the five years since the onset of the pandemic.⁵

Instead of supporting women workers, Trump’s DOL has taken several actions to restrict women’s economic opportunities by rolling back decades of labor and civil rights protections. The administration now proposes to further undermine the agency and center corporate profit over worker well-being. Because women make up nearly two-thirds of workers in the lowest-paid jobs, they have the most to lose from rollbacks of baseline workplace protections.

Below we identify a few key areas where recent, proposed or possible changes have had or could have a significant impact on working women.

OFCCP

The President’s FY26 budget for DOL would eliminate the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP), terminating the vital role OFCCP has played for decades in preventing and addressing discrimination in the workplaces of federal contractors. This action, combined with President Trump’s Executive Order (EO) 14173,⁶ which terminated Executive

² JASMINE TUCKER & JULIE VOGTMAN, NAT’L WOMEN’S LAW CENTER, WHEN HARD WORK IS NOT ENOUGH: WOMEN IN LOW-PAID JOBS (2023), <https://nwlc.org/resource/when-hard-work-is-not-enough-women-in-low-paid-jobs/>.

³ ASHIR COILLBERG, NAT’L WOMEN’S LAW CENTER, A WINDOW INTO THE WAGE GAP: WHAT’S BEHIND IT AND HOW TO CLOSE IT (Feb. 2025), <https://nwlc.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/2025-Window-Into-the-Wage-Gap-Factsheet.pdf>; NAT’L PARTNERSHIP FOR WOMEN AND FAMILIES, AMERICA’S WOMEN AND THE WAGE GAP (Mar. 2025), <https://nationalpartnership.org/report/americas-women-and-the-wage-gap/>.

⁴ ASHIR COILLBERG, NAT’L WOMEN’S LAW CENTER, A WINDOW INTO THE WAGE GAP: WHAT’S BEHIND IT AND HOW TO CLOSE IT (Feb. 2025), <https://nwlc.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/2025-Window-Into-the-Wage-Gap-Factsheet.pdf>.

⁵ NWLC calculations using U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), “Employees on Nonfarm Payrolls by Industry Sector and Selected Industry Detail,” Table B-1 in April 2025 Employment Situation Summary, <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/empsit.t17.htm> and “Employment of Women on Nonfarm Payrolls by Industry Sector, Seasonally Adjusted,” Table B-5 in April 2025 Employment Situation Summary (Washington, DC: May 2, 2025), <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/empsit.t21.htm>. Historical data available at <https://www.bls.gov/webapps/legacy/cesbtab5.htm>. Changes since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic are measured using February 2020 as a reference point. Each year when January data is released, the Bureau of Labor Statistics adjusts its data to incorporate new methodologies and population estimates from the most recent decennial Census and other sources. However, BLS does not revise historical figures with these new estimates and therefore cautions the comparability of figures across years. At the end of each year, BLS also updates the seasonal adjustment factors and revises some historical, seasonally adjusted data to improve comparability. This impacts seasonally adjusted data through January 2018.

⁶ Executive Order 14173 of January 21, 2025, 90 Fed. Reg. 8633 (Jan. 31, 2025), <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2025-01-31/pdf/2025-02097.pdf>.

Order 11246, is devastating for workers who would benefit from equal access to jobs created with federal taxpayer dollars.⁷ EO 11246 provided fundamental civil rights protections to workers employed by federal contractors—approximately one-fifth of the entire U.S. labor force—to be free from discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or national origin. Federal contract workers can be found in industries across our economy—such as construction, food services, pharmaceutical companies and investment firms, and include many low-paid workers.

The Trump administration's proposed termination of OFCCP, along with the revocation of EO 11246, would deeply undermine DOL's role combatting discrimination by federal contractors. Over the past 10 years, OFCCP obtained over \$260 million for over 250,900 employees and job seekers who were discriminated against by federal contractors.⁸ OFCCP's ability to review contractors' compliance with its nondiscrimination obligations was especially helpful in identifying and addressing patterns of discrimination that individual employees may not have had sufficient information to challenge or may have been too frightened to report. In particular, OFCCP has been critical to the fight for equal pay; identifying and challenging the pay discrimination that underlies pernicious race and gender wage gaps has always been an important part of OFCCP's enforcement efforts. The Trump's administration's actions undermine the basic premise that federal contractors benefitting from taxpayer dollars should be protecting their workers from race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, and national origin discrimination at work.

Trump's proposed elimination of OFCCP also seeks to end its core responsibilities under Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Vietnam Era Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act (VEVRAA). The budget would move enforcement of VEVRAA to the Veterans' Employment and Training Service, and Section 503 to the Equal Employment Opportunity Office (EEOC). Although VETS is responsible for enforcing the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA), enforcing VEVRAA requires different processes and expertise, because VEVRAA not only requires employment non-discrimination but also requires employers to take affirmative action to recruit, hire, promote, and retain qualified veterans. OFCCP staff have extensive training and expertise in conducting proactive compliance reviews, which neither VETS nor EEOC staff have. Transferring OFCCP's responsibility for systemic review and analysis to the EEOC and VETS would therefore negatively impact enforcement of workers' rights under these statutes. Paradoxically, while Trump's budget seeks to add additional

⁷ For further explanation of EO 11246 and the role of the OFCCP, see TRUMP EXECUTIVE ORDER ATTACKS EQUAL OPPORTUNITY, NAT'L WOMEN'S LAW CENTER (Jan. 2025), <https://nwlc.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/NWLC-Fact-Sheet-EO-OFCCP-1.31.25.pdf>.

⁸ *OFCCP By the Numbers*, U.S. DEP'T OF LABOR (last visited Jan. 29, 2025; on file with NWLC).

responsibilities to EEOC's jurisdiction, it would drastically slash EEOC's already inadequate budget by almost \$20 million from the FY25 enacted budget.

Women's Bureau

As you know, the United States Congress created the Women's Bureau within the Department of Labor in 1920 to "formulate standards and policies which shall promote the welfare of wage-earning women, improve their working conditions, increase their efficiency, and advance their opportunities for profitable employment." For 105 years, the Women's Bureau has done just that—identifying challenges that women face in the workforce and proposing solutions and creating programs to address these challenges. As noted above, women continue to face significant inequities in the workforce, such as wage gaps; sex discrimination, including sexual assault; and barriers accessing nontraditional jobs that can offer high pay and strong benefits, such as the skilled trades.

Despite the obvious continued need for support for women in the workplace, the President's FY26 budget for DOL states that the Women's Bureau is "an ineffective policy office that is a relic of the past." And unfortunately, DOL's actions seem designed to make this a reality by eliminating staff, cancelling grants and programs intended to help women, and now going so far as seeking to entirely eliminate the Women's Bureau.

Already, two-thirds of Women's Bureau staff have been pushed out and the remaining staff is under threat of reductions in force. DOL has also worked with DOGE to cancel almost all of Women's Bureau grants, which helped train women for in-demand, high-paying jobs in industries such as construction, manufacturing, and tech; address and prevent violence and harassment at work; and increase access to paid leave. The grant terminations included the Women in Apprenticeship and Nontraditional Occupations (WANTO) Grant Program, which was statutorily mandated by Congress in 1992 and has opened opportunities for thousands of women for over 30 years.⁹ WANTO is intended to expand opportunities for women in every region in America and in all industries, including advanced manufacturing, an industry to which this administration has made a public commitment.

⁹ DOL did not cancel the WANTO grant protected by a preliminary injunction issued by a federal court. See *Chicago Women in Trades v. Trump et al.*, No. 25 C 2005, Mem. Op. & Order at 41 (Apr. 14, 2025, N.D. Ill.) (prohibiting the DOL from canceling plaintiff's WANTO grant on the basis that it would likely violate the Constitutional guarantee of separation of powers).

Underlying these actions are the Trump administration's attacks on civil rights, which misrepresent "DEI" as illegal discrimination.¹⁰ By embracing the attacks on diversity, equity and inclusion, DOL is attacking the ability of women to access better paying jobs and build towards a better economic future.

Wage and Hour Protections

Today, women make up nearly two-thirds of workers in the lowest paying jobs, and women of color are particularly overrepresented.¹¹ Women also represent roughly two-thirds of tipped workers, who have higher rates of poverty and are more susceptible to wage theft due to the two-tiered wage system in federal law.¹² Many women are working full time and trying to support families on these wages, but their paychecks are often simply inadequate to meet basic needs, such as renting an apartment, buying groceries, or paying for child care. The overrepresentation of women in low-paid jobs is an important driver of the gender wage gap and leaves many families below the poverty line. Robust enforcement of wage and hour protections is needed to help support women and their families.

Wage Theft

DOL's Wage and Hour Division plays a critical role in combating wage theft and ensuring workers get the pay they are owed. They cannot do that critical work without enough staff in our local communities to investigate alleged violations and work with businesses on complying with the law. Therefore, it is concerning that the President's FY26 budget proposes to slash the agency's budget by \$25 million, leaving the agency with 250 fewer full-time employees.

When workers aren't paid the minimum wage and overtime they are owed when they are owed it, the employer violates the law. We know that this loss of pay means workers might fall behind on rent or struggle to buy groceries. Because women are overrepresented in low-paid jobs, they are especially vulnerable to wage theft and exploitation and are often reluctant to report

¹⁰ See Claire Savage and Alexandra Olson, *Trump's anti-DEI battle threatens nonprofits trying to fill critical labor gaps*, ABC10 (May 12, 2025), <https://www.abc10.com/article/news/nation-world/trumps-anti-dei-battle-threatens-nonprofits-trying-fill-critical-labor-gaps/507-1fc23505-2ccc-4622-aea5-fd534f954085>.

¹¹ NAT'L WOMEN'S LAW CENTER, THE RAISE THE WAGE ACT: VALUING WORKING PEOPLE AND ADVANCING EQUAL PAY, (Apr. 2025), [The Raise the Wage Act: Valuing Working People and Advancing Equal Pay - National Women's Law Center](https://www.nwlc.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Tipped-Workers-FS-2024.6.12v1.pdf).

¹² SARAH JAVAID, NAT'L WOMEN'S LAW CENTER, ONE FAIR WAGE: WOMEN FARE BETTER IN STATES WITH EQUAL TREATMENT FOR TIPPED WORKERS (2024), <https://nwlc.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Tipped-Workers-FS-2024.6.12v1.pdf>.

violations for fear of retaliation.¹³ Under the law, when employers fail to pay workers, they are liable for any unpaid minimum wage and overtime *plus* an equal amount in damages, essentially doubling the amount owed. Under the first Trump administration, DOL launched the Payroll Audit Independent Determination (PAID) Program, which relied on employers to voluntarily audit themselves and come forward to report their own payroll violations. This program let employers off the hook for paying workers full damages if they self-reported violations. We are concerned that the Trump DOL will pursue similar programs again.

Misclassification

When Congress passed the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) nearly 90 years ago, it included a broad definition of “employee” to ensure a wide net of workers have basic workplace protections. But the Trump DOL seems intent on using a standard that limits the number of workers classified as employees for the cases it investigates. In May, the Wage and Hour Division said it would no longer enforce the 2024 interpretive rule that helps reduce the risk that employees are misclassified as independent contractors with no rights under the law.¹⁴ Instead, they are reviving previous guidance that conflicts with the law. The Department’s new enforcement policy could have the effect of denying workers the protections to which they are entitled. Misclassifying employees as independent contractors prevents them from being covered by the basic workplace rights and protections provided under the FLSA, including overtime and minimum wage protections, protections for nursing employees, and equal pay protections, as well as protections under other laws, such as the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) and federal anti-discrimination protections, including protections against sexual harassment. This has deep implications for women and workers of color, who are overrepresented in low-paid jobs where employers are more likely to misclassify employees as independent contractors.

For example, the FLSA has provisions guaranteeing workers the right to take breaks to pump breast milk in a private space while at work. A few years ago, Congress amended the law on a bipartisan basis to extend these rights to millions more workers. Facilitating the misclassification of workers will lead to more new mothers facing denial of their right to pump time under FLSA. Another example is FMLA, which provides unpaid, job-protected leave. FMLA relies on the FLSA’s definition of “employee” so DOL’s enforcement policy may also lead to workers losing

¹³ See NAT’L EMPLOYMENT LAW PROJECT, WORKERS LOSE BILLIONS IN UNPAID WAGES EVERY YEAR (July 2023), <https://www.nelp.org/app/uploads/2023/07/Workers-Lose-Billions-Unpaid-Wages-Every-Year.pdf>.

¹⁴ U.S. Department of Labor Issues Guidance on Independent Contractor Misclassification Enforcement, U.S. DEPT OF LABOR (May 1, 2025), <https://www.dol.gov/newsroom/releases/whd/whd20250501>.

their right to family and medical leave. Family and medical leave is particularly important for women, who disproportionately bear responsibility for child¹⁵ and elder care.¹⁶

Overtime rule

Because women, and especially women of color, disproportionately hold lower-paying jobs and serve as the primary caregivers for their families, strong overtime standards are critically important to women. For far too long, employers have taken advantage of weak overtime rules to make their salaried employees work more hours for less pay. The Biden administration modernized the overtime rule, which would have benefited an estimated 4.3 million workers—most of whom are women. The overtime rule has been challenged in litigation, but instead of continuing its defense of the rule, the Trump DOL has sought to pause its appeals of rulings blocking the overtime rule.

Conclusion

We appreciate the opportunity to share our concerns regarding the Trump DOL's attacks on equal employment opportunities, civil rights and wage protections. The Trump Administration's regressive anti-worker agenda threatens the economic security, safety, and well-being of everyone, endangering women and their families and workers everywhere.

¹⁵ NWLC calculations using U.S. Department of Labor, BLS, 2023 American Time Use Survey (ATUS), "Table 9. Time adults spent caring for household children as a primary activity by sex, age, and day of week, 2023 annual averages," June 27, 2024, <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/atus.t09.htm>.

¹⁶ 2023 BLS ATUS "Unpaid Eldercare in the United States—2021-2022 Summary," September 21, 2023, <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/elcare.nr0.htm>.



Trump Executive Order Attacks Workplace Equal Opportunity

On January 21, 2025, President Trump issued an Executive Order, “[Ending Illegal Discrimination and Restoring Merit-Based Opportunity](#).” This EO revokes a series of other executive orders, including long-standing civil rights protections for workers employed by federal contractors, and threatens private entities that promote equal opportunity—including businesses, nonprofits, philanthropic foundations, professional associations, and higher education institutions—with civil investigations and potential litigation.

The Trump EO rescinds a 60-year-old executive order signed by President Johnson and expanded by later presidents, Executive Order 11246. EO 11246 provided core civil rights protections for workers employed by federal contractors—approximately one-fifth of the entire U.S. labor force—by prohibiting federal contractors from discriminating on the basis of race, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or gender identity. The EO also helped open the doors of opportunity and promote fairness in pay and promotions by requiring contractors to undertake affirmative efforts to promote equal opportunity and prevent discrimination. EO 11246 was fundamental in ensuring that businesses who receive the privilege of contracting with the federal government did not use taxpayer dollars to unlawfully discriminate against working people.

To ensure that taxpayer dollars were not misused for discrimination, the Department of Labor’s Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP) had unique powers to identify and address patterns of discrimination that individual employees may not have sufficient information to challenge. Pursuant to the Trump EO, however, the Department of Labor must stop all investigative and enforcement activity under EO 11246, including efforts to affirmatively evaluate federal contractors’ compliance with EEO laws.

The Trump EO purports to eliminate federal contractors' legal obligation to proactively reduce barriers to equal opportunity in the workplace based on race, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or gender identity.

- The Trump EO revokes EO 11246 and directs OFCCP to immediately stop promoting diversity and enforcing affirmative action requirements.
- As the result of the rescission of EO 11246, OFCCP no longer has the tools to ensure federal contractors face legal consequences when they fail to take basic steps like assessing the fairness of their pay practices or making a meaningful effort to recruit qualified applicants from all backgrounds.
- OFCCP's enforcement efforts have secured millions of dollars for workers impacted by discrimination and required employers to remedy discriminatory practices. The Trump EO eliminates this critical mechanism for combatting workplace discrimination and reducing barriers to equal opportunity.
- Federal contractors must still comply with all federal and state anti-discrimination laws, including Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits discrimination based on sex (including sexual orientation and gender identity), race, national origin, or religion. The Trump EO cannot alter these obligations.

This EO seeks to intimidate businesses and other organizations into ending efforts to advance equal employment opportunity.

- The Trump EO directs the U.S. Attorney General to coordinate with federal agencies to report on diversity, equity, and inclusion practices by private entities, such as publicly traded corporations, large nonprofits, large philanthropic foundations, professional associations, and higher education institutions, including identifying the "most egregious and discriminatory DEI practitioners in each sector" for potential investigation and litigation.

- Although the Trump EO purports to target "illegal DEI," the EO fails to define what activities would be permissible. The EO's vague wording creates confusion and appears intended to shut down all attempts to remove barriers to equal opportunity.
- By targeting businesses and other organizations for abusive enforcement of civil rights laws and requiring federal agencies to point fingers at private entities, this EO weaponizes the federal government to create a chilling effect and deter efforts to ensure equal opportunity for all workers.

This EO intentionally misrepresents efforts to reduce barriers to equal opportunity.

- The EO falsely asserts that efforts to reduce barriers to equal opportunity "violate the text and spirit of our longstanding Federal civil-rights laws."
- Diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts remove artificial barriers to open the doors of opportunity so that everyone has the chance to compete and succeed. People who feel valued and respected are more engaged and more likely to contribute their best to their workplace and their colleagues. Diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives create a sense of belonging that allow people to reach their potential.
- These efforts include things as simple as antidiscrimination trainings; efforts to eliminate workplace harassment; leadership development opportunities; workplace culture and teambuilding initiatives; and efforts to assess workplace diversity and pay equity to ensure both fairness and compliance with anti-discrimination law.
- The efforts also help companies meet their nondiscrimination obligations under federal civil rights laws.
- This EO is just part of this Administration's broader strategy to roll back and weaponize civil rights protections. When the Trump administration claims to attack 'DEI,' it actually seeks to undo core civil rights laws and protections, exposing all working people to the threat of discrimination based on who they are.

Background on the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs

The Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP) is an agency within the Department of Labor. OFCCP oversees enforcement of Executive Order 11246, Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Vietnam Era Veterans Readjustment Assistance Act of 1974, and it assists federal contractors with compliance with these laws.

In addition to remedying individual instances of discrimination, through its enforcement of EO 11246, OFCCP could undertake review of contractors' employment practices, allowing it to identify and address patterns of discrimination that individual employees may not have had sufficient information to challenge or may have been frightened to come forward about. For example, OFCCP could conduct compliance evaluations to ensure contractors were not engaged in discriminatory pay practices or provide assistance to help contractors attract and find a diverse pool of applicants. OFCCP has produced important resources to combat discrimination, including several industry-specific technical assistance guides such as its recent Guide to Combatting Harassment in the Construction Industry.

Over the past 10 years, OFCCP has obtained over \$260 million for over 250,900 employees and job seekers who were discriminated against by federal contractors. For example:

- In 2024, State Street Corp., a global financial services company, agreed to set aside \$4.2 million to make pay adjustments after OFCCP found that the company had discriminated against female managing directors in violation of EO 11246. State Street also agreed to conduct a pay equity analysis to evaluate base pay and compensation for all employees.
- In 2023, Pitney Bowes, which "provides technology, logistics, and financial services to more than 90 percent of the Fortune 500," agreed to pay over \$1.5 million to 468 job applicants and extend job offers to over 100 applicants, after a compliance review by OFCCP found that the company violated EO 11246 by engaging in racial discrimination in the hiring process.
- In 2022, an OFCCP compliance evaluation found that LinkedIn had engaged in gender-based pay discrimination. LinkedIn agreed to pay over \$1.8 million in back wages and interest, evaluate its compensation to ensure it is not discriminatory, revise its compensation policies, and commit to monitoring and reporting requirements.

April 22, 2025

**Civil Society Groups Alarmed by Cuts to ILAB Grants to Address
Forced Labor and Child Labor**

The undersigned organizations are alarmed by the U.S. Department of Labor's decision to cancel approximately \$500 million in grants awarded by the Bureau of International Labor Affairs (ILAB). These funds play a vital role in addressing forced labor, child labor, and human trafficking across the globe.

ILAB's grant programs are crucial in the fight against these abuses, supporting efforts to eliminate child labor, prevent exploitation, uphold freedom of association, support trade unions, build capacity and strengthen enforcement mechanisms that combat forced labor worldwide. Their elimination weakens U.S. efforts to eradicate forced labor. This decision undercuts the U.S. government's decades-long commitment to combating human trafficking. More importantly, it strips essential support for those at risk of exploitation, including children, further entrenching cycles of forced labor in supply chains.

We strongly believe that dismantling these programs will not make the U.S. safer, secure, and more prosperous. Instead, these cuts undermine American workers and businesses by allowing unfair competition from goods produced with forced labor. They will also have severe implications for our country's economic security.

We call on the Secretary of Labor to immediately restore ILAB grants and maintain robust staffing at ILAB to ensure that its projects are administered properly and that the office is able to meet its Congressionally mandated responsibilities. This funding is important to create a level playing field for American businesses and workers while fighting human trafficking and forced labor.

Signed,

Above Ground
Action on Smoking and Health
AFL-CIO
Alliance to End Human Trafficking

Alliance to End Slavery and Trafficking (ATEST)
 American Apparel and Footwear Association
 American Federation of Teachers
 American Industrial Hygiene Association
 Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families
 Association of Farmworker Opportunity Programs (AFOP)
 Azul
 Be Slavery Free
 Beyond Borders
 Campaign to End U.S. Child Labor
 Centro de los Derechos del Migrante, Inc (CDM)
 Childfund International
 Childhood Education International
 Child Labor Coalition
 China Labor Watch
 Child Welfare League of America
 Coffee Watch
 Colorado Fiscal Institute (CFI)
 Common Good Iowa
 Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, U.S. Provinces
 Corporate Accountability Lab
 Covenant House International
 Disability Rights International
 Dr. Bronner's
 Earth Ethics, Inc.
 Economic Policy Institute
 Educate the Children Inc.
 Fair Labor Association
 Fairtrade America
 Family Support Center
 Fine Cacao and Chocolate Institute
 FishWise
 First Focus on Children
 Florida Policy Institute
 Food Empowerment Project
 Freedom Network USA
 Free the Slaves
 Free Uyghur Now
 Futures Without Violence
 Georgetown University Collaborative on Global Children's Issues
 Georgia Budget and Policy Institute
 Global Campaign for Education - US
 Global March Against Child Labour
 Green America

Greenpeace USA
 Global Labor Justice
 GoodWeave International
 HEAL Trafficking
 Heartland Initiative
 HKM Employment Attorneys LLP
 Human Rights First
 Human Rights Watch
 Human Trafficking Legal Center
 Humanity United
 Indiana Community Action Poverty Institute
 Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility
 International Corporate Accountability Roundtable (ICAR)
 International Justice Mission
 International Rescue Committee
 International Rights Advocates
 Investor Alliance for Human Rights
 Jewish Movement for Uyghur Freedom
 Justice At Last
 Kalmanovitz Initiative for Labor and the Working Poor
 La Isla Network
 Maquila Solidarity Network
 Media Voices for Children
 National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd
 National Consumers League
 National Council Occupational Safety and Health (COSH)
 National Education Association
 National Employment Law Project
 Occupational Health & Safety Section/APHA
 Oceana
 Oxfam America
 Partners for Dignity and Rights
 PCUN, Oregon's Farmworker Union
 Polaris
 Preble Street
 Public Citizen
 Responsibility Sourcing Network
 Rights CoLab
 Santa Clara University - International Human Rights Clinic
 Shine Global Inc.
 Social Accountability International
 Solidarity Center
 Sunita Jain Anti-Trafficking Initiative, Loyola Law School
 The Centre for Child Rights and Business

The Global March Against Child Labour
 Together for Girls
 Transparentem
 University of Maryland SAFE Center for Human Trafficking Survivors
 University of Wisconsin-Madison, USA
 Uyghur Human Rights Project
 Verité
 VOICE Network
 Winrock International
 Womankind
 Worker Rights Consortium
 Workplace Justice Lab at Rutgers University
 World Vision

[Questions and responses submitted for the record by Secretary Chavez-DeRemer follows:]

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June 26, 2025

The Honorable Lori M. Chavez-DeRemer
 Secretary
 U.S. Department of Labor
 200 Constitution Avenue, NW
 Washington, DC 20210

Dear Secretary Chavez-DeRemer:

Thank you again for testifying before the Education and Workforce Committee hearing on "Examining the Policies and Priorities of the Department of Labor." Enclosed are additional questions submitted by Committee members following the hearing. Please provide a written response no later than July 28, 2025, for inclusion in the hearing record. Responses should be sent to Daniel Nadel (daniel.nadel@mail.house.gov, (202) 226-3873) of the Committee staff. We appreciate your contribution to the work of the Committee.

Sincerely,

Tim Walberg
 Chairman

Questions for the Record for Lori Chavez-DeRemer

**Committee on Education and Workforce Hearing
“Examining the Policies and Priorities of the Department of Labor”
June 5, 2025**

Chairman Tim Walberg (R-MI)

1. Beginning in 2011, pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs) began to implement formulary exclusions that require patients to pay completely out-of-pocket for a drug or undertake a lengthy appeals or exceptions process. Formulary exclusions have grown 961 percent—from 109 drugs to 1,156 drugs—from 2014-2022. To what extent do formulary exclusions limit patient choice and drug access?
2. When PBMs’ compensation is tied to the list price of a medicine, this can lead to PBMs disfavoring generic or lower-priced brand competitors. PBMs continuously say that lowering drug costs for patients is a top priority. Would you consider reviewing a reform idea that would break the link between PBM compensation and the list price of medicines to benefit patients in meaningful ways, such as through increased coverage of lower cost alternatives such as generics or biosimilars?
3. On May 15, 2025, the Departments of Health and Human Services, Labor (DOL), and Treasury (Tri-Agencies) issued a statement announcing they will not enforce the 2024 *Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act* Final Rule. The non-enforcement is in response to a legal challenge by the ERISA Industry Committee regarding the lawfulness of the 2024 rule and is expected to remain in place for at least 18 months after a final decision in the lawsuit. According to the non-enforcement policy, the Tri-Agencies are reexamining the broader parity enforcement approach.

Aspects of mental health and substance use disorder law and regulations remain overly complex and technical. As a result, compliance has become a moving target through a patchwork of unclear and often conflicting guidance. The proliferation of differing compliance approaches, tools, and interpretations has led to confusion and strains on government, health plan, employer, and provider resources. Will you commit to working with health plans, employers, and other interested stakeholders to streamline the parity compliance process?

4. The President has promised “radical price transparency,” and I hope to see new regulations soon requiring group health plans that are subject to the *Employee Retirement Income Security Act* to finally let patients know what the price tag will be for their trip to the hospital or just a routine doctor’s visit. This initial price for patients before they go to the doctor is called an “advance explanation of benefits” and has been the law since the end of 2020. Can you update us on where these new regulations stand at the Employee Benefits Security Administration?
5. The tree care industry continues to rank among the most hazardous in the country, with a

fatality rate that far exceeds the national average. At the same time, it plays a vital role in protecting critical infrastructure—maintaining powerlines and roadways, supporting wildfire prevention, and responding to hurricanes, winter storms, and other disasters. Despite these responsibilities and risks, there is still no dedicated Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) standard tailored to the unique hazards of tree care operations. Instead, employers must navigate a patchwork of general industry standards that were not designed for arboricultural work. This fragmented regulatory approach creates confusion, results in inconsistent enforcement, and ultimately undermines safety for workers performing essential public-facing services. During the first Trump administration, OSHA completed the *Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act* panel process for a tree care operations standard. That process produced strong recommendations and a clear path for advancing the rule. However, the Biden administration repeatedly delayed publication of a proposed rule, despite longstanding bipartisan calls for action. At a May 2025 hearing before the Subcommittee on Workforce Protections, Members of Congress again raised concerns about this delay and heard testimony emphasizing that a properly crafted standard would not impose new regulatory burdens. Rather, it would replace the current patchwork with clear, practical requirements—consolidating and improving existing regulations to better protect workers in this high-risk field.

- a. Does DOL consider completion of a tree care operations standard a priority?
 - b. What steps are being taken to move this standard forward?
6. OSHA's injury and illness recordkeeping system, including its recordability criteria, was established in 1971. Do you believe it would be prudent to evaluate the OSHA injury and illness recordkeeping to ensure they appropriately meet the needs of today's employers and workers?
7. Physical therapy treatment, when delivered for work-related injuries, is currently classified as medical treatment, triggering its recordability under OSHA reporting requirements. Despite physical therapy's advantages, the current system inadvertently discourages proactive injury prevention, ergonomic intervention, and rehabilitation by penalizing employers and employees for pursuing recovery or prevention through physical therapy. Would you be willing to evaluate rescinding physical therapy intervention as an OSHA recordable event to ensure U.S. workers are receiving low-cost, highly effective intervention for injury prevention and recovery while concurrently reducing the administrative burden of U.S. employers?
8. Enacted in 1927, the *Federal Longshore and Harbor Workers' Compensation Act* (Longshore Act) provides for the payment of compensation, medical care, and vocational rehabilitation services to employees disabled from on-the-job injuries that occur on the navigable waters of the United States, or in adjoining areas customarily used in the loading, unloading, repairing, or building of a vessel. The Longshore Act (through the *Defense Base Act*) also applies to employees of companies performing Department of Defense contracts.

Under current law, the Longshore Act holds employers that are subject to it responsible for hearing loss that occurred before and after employment, as well as loss caused by non-work-related employment or loss due to the natural aging process. However, OSHA and most state-level workers' compensation laws permit a reduction in claims value based on age-related hearing loss. Will DOL consider a review of its administration of the Longshore Act for the purposes of updating its processes and recommending to Congress any legislative changes it considers necessary?

9. On April 23, the President signed an executive order affirming that his administration is committed to utilizing apprenticeships to expand the American workforce—including directing DOL to submit plans by this summer to facilitate enrolling at least 1 million new apprentices. One of the tools to support apprenticeship programs has been the use of “industry intermediaries” which allow sectors to tailor programs and outreach based on practical knowledge and the specific needs of its employers. What role will intermediaries play in DOL’s overall plans to support and expand apprenticeship programs?

Rep. Glenn “GT” Thompson (R-PA)

1. Madam Secretary, can you explain how you see career and technical education (CTE) playing a role in achieving the President’s Executive Order on Preparing Americans for High-Paying, Skilled Trade Jobs of the Future, including increasing pre-apprenticeships and registered apprenticeships through CTE programs?

Rep. Glenn Grothman (R-WI)

1. Secretary Chavez-DeRemer, OSHA’s proposed rule adopts a one-size-fits-all approach to heat illness and injury prevention, applying identical requirements across indoor and outdoor environments and across all sectors, including agriculture, construction, and manufacturing, without differentiation. This broad application fails to consider critical distinctions in worksite conditions, tasks performed, or industry-specific risks. How does OSHA justify imposing identical obligations on such a broad and diverse range of workplaces, regardless of differences in work tasks, physical environments, industry risks, or business size? Shouldn’t the final rule recognize and account for the distinct operational realities of sectors where heat is a controlled byproduct of indoor production rather than an ambient environmental exposure?
2. Secretary Chavez-DeRemer, the proposed rule’s rigid acclimatization requirements are another example of its inflexible, one-size-fits-all approach. Mandating a specific phase-in schedule for all new or returning workers, regardless of industry, workforce composition, or existing safety practices, fails to recognize how acclimatization is already effectively managed in controlled indoor environments like manufacturing. For example, many manufacturing facilities already use tailored onboarding, cross-training, and seasonal protocols to manage exposure. OSHA needs to address the operational and financial burdens this inflexible framework imposes on manufacturing sectors, where staffing challenges and continuous operations leave little room for a rigid acclimatization

schedule. Shouldn't OSHA consider allowing employer-determined acclimatization protocols that still meet the rule's safety objectives but offer greater flexibility based on industry context?

3. The Federal government has an obligation to effectively manage taxpayer dollars and ensure all Federal programs are efficient and mission driven. The Job Corps Program is no exception. As part of the *A Stronger Workforce for America Act* (ASWA), Congress and Job Corp stakeholders have proposed several reforms to the Job Corps program estimated to save the taxpayer tens of millions of dollars per year and unlock key partnerships with our nation's top employers. Reforms would also address concerns identified by the Department of Labor's Job Corps transparency report.
4. Secretary Chavez-DeRemer, does the Department of Labor support the reforms to the Job Corps Program proposed as part of the *A Stronger Workforce for America Act* (ASWA) in the 118th Congress?
5. Secretary Chavez-DeRemer, would the Department of Labor support an extension of the Job Corps Program to allow for meaningful reforms to take effect?
6. Secretary Chavez-DeRemer, Obama-Biden policies required Job Corps students who have a high school diploma to participate in remedial classes until they test on the Test of Adult Basic Education that they are effectively "college-ready." But most of these students enrolled to get a trade education and become an electrician or a welder, not go to college. How much has Job Corps student attrition increased and graduation rates decreased because of these misguided Obama-Biden policies?

Rep. Elise Stefanik (R-NY)

1. Upstate New York and North Country farmers that utilize the H-2A program in my district consistently express the devastating impact the Biden Administration inflicted on family farms across America due to the March 2023 DOL Adverse Effect Wage Rate methodology final rule. This new methodology has resulted in skyrocketing wages and has created a massive administrative burden for farmers who use the program. Secretary Chavez-DeRemer, what steps is your department taking to ensure that wage determinations under the H-2A program are not placing an unsustainable burden on farmers who are already operating on razor-thin margins?
2. Do I have your commitment to address a long-term solution regarding the Adverse Effect Wage Rate and reverse the methodology that took effect in March 2023?
3. Many farmers in my district have expressed concern that the soaring Adverse Effect Wage Rate increases are not only hurting their ability to hire employees but are also making it nearly impossible to compete globally. Has your department conducted a cost-benefit analysis on the long-term consequences of these wildly elevated wage hikes for U.S. agricultural competitiveness?

4. During my over decade-long career in Congress, I have continuously advocated for our hardworking New York dairy farmers to have access to the H-2A program. Secretary Chavez-DeRemer, are you willing to work with Congress on tweaking our agricultural worker visa program to allow for year-round visas?

Rep. Rick Allen (R-GA)

1. Experts recognize that misaligned incentives in the drug payment system encourage PBMs to favor medicines with high list prices and larger manufacturer rebates or discounts. However, when PBMs faced criticism over this dynamic, they shifted their compensation models to focus on administrative or other fees, which are still tied to list prices. Isn't this just reshuffling the same flawed incentives? Would delinking PBM compensation from the list price of drugs—so they're paid a flat service fee rather than a percentage of rebates or list prices—help eliminate the incentive to prioritize higher-cost drugs?
2. Alternative funding programs (AFPs) are programs that employers use that involve contracting with vendor to target commercially insured patients taking targeted drugs to shift the cost of covering prescription drugs to third-parties such as patient support and assistance programs. Do you believe that AFPs often lead to lapses in care for individuals with chronic and/or high-cost conditions? Do you believe that employers are aware of the danger AFPs can cause their employees, whether through delayed access to prescription drugs or downright denials?
3. President Trump's Executive Order issued on May 12 directed the Department of Labor (DOL) to issue regulations on prohibited transactions, which would require PBMs to disclose information regarding how they are compensated? How can DOL leverage those regulations to protect employers and employees from non-transparent fees that PBMs extract?

Rep. Burgess Owens (R-UT)

1. Research from Credential Engine has identified more than one million credentials—from degrees and certificates to badges and licenses—currently available in the U.S. labor market. Yet employers, educators, students, and workers still lack a clear, standardized way to understand what these credentials actually mean—what skills they represent, how they align with workforce demands, or whether they translate into better jobs and earnings.

At the same time, there is growing interest in modernizing our approach to workforce data through tools like Learning and Employment Records, which can help individuals more easily verify and communicate their competencies throughout their careers. But without consistent, transparent credential data, these innovations won't fulfill their promise.

Can you speak to how improving credential transparency—particularly the use of structured, comparable, and open data about the content and value of credentials—can support skills-based hiring, empower workers to better signal their skills, and enhance the impact of tools like LERs in the workforce development system?

2. In its 2021 FLSA worker classification rule, the Department of Labor included an example specific to the trucking industry. With this example, the Department clarified that a motor carrier requiring an independent contractor to use a device that limits their truck's speed would not affect the trucker's classification, and would not indicate control by the motor carrier, because this requirement is "implemented in order to comply with specific legal obligations and to enhance safety."

This example seems to conflict with the Department of Transportation's approach to speed limiting technology on trucks. Over the past 15 years, DOT has been considering a mandate requiring speed limiting devices in trucks, but has never issued a specific requirement or regulation to do so. Right now, there is no specific legal obligation to use a speed limiting device on a truck. In fact, it seems unlikely that DOT under President Trump would move forward on a speed limiter mandate due to safety concerns expressed by America's truckers.

As you and the Department are considering revisions to FLSA worker classification regulations, would you defer to the Department of Transportation's determinations on what is safe and required for the operation of heavy-duty trucks, specifically with regard to the use of speed limiters?

3. On April 23, 2025, President Trump issued an Executive Order directing the Departments of Labor, Education, and Commerce to identify alternatives to four-year degrees that align with employers' skill needs. With over 400,000 open construction jobs and 40% of the workforce expected to retire within a decade, expanding access to skilled trades is more urgent than ever.

How is the Department of Labor advancing this Executive Order to help more Americans enter these high-demand, well-paying careers?

Ranking Member Robert C. "Bobby" Scott (D-VA)

- 1) The Department of Labor has the statutory requirement under Section 503 of the *Rehabilitation Act* (Section 503) and the *Vietnam Era Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act* (VEVRAA) to enforce anti-discrimination requirements with regards to federal contract workers who have disabilities and/or veteran status. Under the first Trump Administration, OFCCP successfully initiated focused reviews under Section 503 and

VEVRAA to ensure that federal contractors were providing equal employment opportunities and complying with requirements of these statutes.¹

- a. What is OFCCP currently doing to ensure that it is meeting its statutory requirements to ensure that federal contract workers are not being discriminated against on the basis of disability and/or veteran status?
 - b. Is OFCCP currently conducting any compliance evaluations or other enforcement activity to ensure federal contractors are meeting their responsibilities under Section 503 and VEVRAA?
 - i. If so, please provide a description of enforcement activities OFCCP is currently conducting with regards to enforcing Section 503 and VEVRAA.
 - ii. If not, please provide an explanation as to why these enforcement activities are not occurring.
 - c. How many complaints alleging discrimination under Section 503 or VEVRAA have been filed with OFCCP since January 20, 2025?
 - d. How many active cases related to claims under Section 503 and VEVRAA are currently being investigated by OFCCP?
 - e. Are workers receiving timely responses and updates regarding the status of their filed claims? What information has been shared with workers who have filed claims about the processing of their claims?
- 2) The President's FY 2026 budget proposes to eliminate OFCCP and move the responsibility for the enforcement of Section 503 and VEVRAA to other agencies. Under this proposal, what is the plan for the remaining OFCCP staff after any transfer?
 - 3) Please provide the following information regarding staffing numbers for OFCCP:
 - a. Number of current staff, broken down by office location, who are not on administrative leave;
 - b. Number of staff who have taken the Deferred Resignation Program; and
 - c. Number of staff who were placed on administrative leave and served a Reduction in Force notice.
 - 4) Section 159 of the *Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act* (WIOA) includes clear requirements and processes for the closure of Job Corps Centers that were not followed in the "pause" announced on May 29, 2025.
 - a. How does the Department define a "pause" and how is it different than a "termination"?
 - b. What authority is the Department using to "pause" operations? Please provide a citation for the law or regulation.
 - 5) With Job Corps operations on pause, how does the Department plan to fulfill its obligations to implement the *Full-Year Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act*,

¹ https://edworkforce.house.gov/uploadedfiles/craig_leen_-_testimony.pdf.
<https://www.dol.gov/newsroom/releases/ofccp/ofccp20201019-0>

2025, which includes \$1,760,155,000 for Job Corps? Does the Department of Labor intend to begin a new bidding process for contracts in order to operate the “paused” centers for FY 2025?

- 6) Please provide a list of every Job Corps center operator contract that has been terminated or modified since January 20, 2025, including the total amount of funds originally awarded to each operator, the amount of funds that each operator has spent up to the date of the contract’s termination or modification, and the amount of remaining unspent funds for each contract.
- 7) On April 25, 2025, the Department’s Employment and Training Administration (ETA) released a “Job Corps Transparency Report”, which is cited throughout the DOL press release announcing the pause of operations at centers. However, the report provides cost per enrollee based on enrollment from program year 2023. Please provide an updated cost per enrollee with the enrollments on campuses as of May 28, 2025, incorporating onboard strength at each campus.
- 8) Since the Trump Administration began on January 20, 2025, it’s my understanding that DOL has not completed any background checks, which has led to a complete halt in new enrollments at Job Corps centers.
 - a. Please provide the number of new enrollments on hold due to the cessation of background checks since January 20, 2025.
 - b. Please provide a list of onboard strength (enrollment) at each Job Corps center before January 20, 2025, as well as immediately before the operations pause on May 29, 2025.
 - c. Will you commit to conducting background checks to begin new enrollments in the program?
- 9) The WANTO grants were funded at FY 2024 levels through the *Full-Year Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act, 2025*. How does the Department plan to fulfill its obligations to award those funds? Does the Department intend to release a new FOA for the FY 2025 WANTO grants?
- 10) It’s been widely reported (including by WIRED²) that DOGE staffers, including Miles Collins, Aram Moghaddassi, and Marko Elez have gotten access to systems within the Department that contain U.S. citizens’ Social Security numbers. Protecting Americans’ privacy is an incredibly important responsibility, which should not be taken lightly.
 - a. In any instance where the Department has shared data with DOGE, where has the data been stored?
 - b. What processes are in place to ensure U.S. citizens’ and legal residents’ data from DOL is not being copied by Elon Musk and his affiliates?
 - c. Has DOL staff and/or DOGE shared National Farmworker Jobs Program data with other agencies during the Trump Administration?

² <https://www.wired.com/story/doge-access-immigration-data-department-of-labor/>

- i. If so, who approved sharing the National Farmworker Jobs Program data?
 - ii. If so, for what purposes has data from the National Farmworker Jobs Program been shared with other agencies?
- 11) A recent report from the Department of Labor's Inspector General shows the vast majority of employers and anti-union consultants failing to report persuader activities under the *Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act* (LMRDA). Widespread non-compliance with the LMRDA's reporting requirements for employers and persuaders denies workers critical pre-representation election information—such as who is being paid and how much they are being paid to persuade workers on the question of union representation—and undermines their right to free and fair elections. What concrete steps is the Department taking to increase compliance by employers and their consultants with regard to persuader activities?
 - a. Will the Department implement all six of the Inspector General's recommendations in its May 2024 report entitled, *OLMS Can Do More to Protect Workers' Rights to Unionize Through Persuader Activity Disclosure* (May 2024 Report)?
 - i. If the Department declines to implement one or more of the recommendations, please provide a specific explanation for each, stating why the Department will not implement it and whether the Department has an alternative proposal and an explanation of the alternative proposal.
 - b. Will the Department implement all six of the Inspector General's recommendations in its May 2024 Report by the end of Calendar Year 2025?
 - i. If the Department will not implement one or more of the recommendations by the end of Calendar Year 2025, please provide a specific explanation of why the Department cannot do so, including resource constraints or the time required for implementation.
- 12) For more than five decades, the ERISA Advisory Council has served as a valuable resource for the Department of Labor. As you know, Ranking Member DeSaulnier and I wrote to you recently asking for information regarding the status of the Council, which has yet to hold a meeting this year. The Council is established by section 512 of ERISA and is required to meet at least four times per year. The Department is required to support the Council's operations, including by providing an Executive Secretary to the Council. As we await your full response to this letter, I request answers to the following questions:
 - a. Will you confirm that you are not considering abolishing the Council or purging its membership?
 - b. Will you commit to convening the minimum of four statutorily required meetings of the Council this year? When will the first meeting be held?
 - c. According to the Department's website, the position of Executive Secretary is vacant. When do you intend to fill this position, as required by law?
- 13) The Employee Benefits Security Administration (EBSA) has the vast mission of protecting the health, retirement, and other employee benefits of more than 156 million American workers, retirees, and their families covered by millions of plans holding \$14

trillion in assets. However, EBSA has for decades been severely underfunded, with about one investigator for every 17,500 plans within its jurisdiction. According to recent reports, more than 20 percent of EBSA's workforce has been lost during the first few months of the Trump Administration, yet the Budget proposes to further cut EBSA and neglects to extend the bipartisan *No Surprises Act* implementation funding. This would leave EBSA with just 640 FTEs, a decline of more than 35 percent since 2012 when the agency's mission was much smaller.

- a. How can you vigorously enforce the law—including shared bipartisan priorities such as health care price transparency, surprise medical billing, and improving retirement security—while slashing EBSA's workforce?

14) In 2020, President Trump signed into law the *Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021*, which included important reforms that have improved enforcement of the *Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act* (MHPAEA) by EBSA. Despite the high recoveries EBSA has achieved on behalf of plan participants thanks to this law, the Department has announced nonenforcement of the 2024 MHPAEA final rule while also shrinking the agency's workforce.

- a. Does the Administration intend to further roll back this bipartisan progress on parity by issuing regulations or guidance that would weaken MHPAEA?
- b. Have you analyzed the projected impact of nonenforcement of the law on benefit recoveries for people with behavioral health needs? If so, please provide this information to the Committee.

15) Rep. Ilhan Omar asked you during the hearing, "[C]an you assure this Committee that you will not propose any rollbacks of child labor rules that prevent children from being employed in hazardous occupations?" You did not answer that question; instead, your response reiterated your commitment "to fighting against all child exploitation" and then addressed a separate matter regarding funds for the Bureau of International Labor Affairs. Please address the specific question whether you will commit not to roll back hazardous occupation orders.

Representative Haley Stevens (D-MI)

1. There has been a lot of talk from you and this Administration about supporting American workers, including union workers. It's been less than five months but I think we can safely say that a lot of that talk has proved empty. So far, the Trump Administration has stripped one million federal workers of their right to form a union and has undermined the independence of the National Labor Relations Board by firing one of its board members. I don't see why Michiganders should trust an Administration to protect private sector workers when they treat their own workforce with such disrespect.

I am from Michigan where union membership really means something. We recognize that unions are a path to safe, high-paying, middle-class jobs for working people. I hope that the Administration you're a part of quits talking a big game and actually starts acting on behalf of American workers.

So Secretary Chavez-DeRemer, my first question focuses on the Office of Labor-Management Standards, or OLMS. This office is charged with collecting financial disclosures from employers when they hire anti-union “persuaders” or consultants. Transparency on how much companies are spending on these activities is vital. President Trump has tapped, Elisabeth Messenger, who has a history of supporting anti-union causes to lead OLMS.

- a. In light of this, will you commit that OLMS under your leadership will ensure employer compliance with financial disclosure requirements when it comes to anti-union consultants?
 - b. In fact the Department’s Inspector General found in a May 2024 report that employers significantly underreported and delayed their financial disclosures on “persuader” activity. Will you commit to improving OLMS enforcement on employers’ financial disclosures in line with the Inspector General’s recommendation?
2. I’d like to move on to another issue that often faces workers who decide to join a union: difficulty reaching a first contract with employers. Oftentimes, workers who decide to organize can face significant delays in reaching a first contract with their employer. This only hurts workers and saps employers of valuable resources.
 - a. As a former cosponsor of the Protecting the Right to Organize Act during your time in the House, do you recognize the right of a legally formed union to reach a timely first contract with their employer?
 - b. Do you think the Department of Labor has a role to play in making sure workers who have organized are can reach a first contract with their employers?
 - c. I am concerned that current and future budget cuts under this Administration will undermine worker protections, including their right to organize. Will you commit to working with Congress to ensure budget cuts do not negatively impact these rights?

Rep. Ilhan Omar (D-MN)

Impacts on the Bureau of International Labor Affairs (ILAB)

1. Please provide a list of all ILAB programs terminated by the Department in March 2025, including:
 - a) Project Title
 - b) Country of implementation
 - c) Original duration and funding level
 - d) Congressional authorization
2. What specific criteria or policy rationale was used to evaluate and terminate these grants?
 - a) Are you aware that multiple stakeholders, from [Members of Congress](#) to [labor/advocates](#) to [industry groups](#) have spoken in defense of ILAB?

- b) Were any of these stakeholders consulted or notified before the decision, and if not, please explain how you will prevent a race to the bottom for labor and business practices without these international and on-the-ground partnerships?
 - c) Without these ILAB grants, how will you ensure that U.S. workers and businesses do not face unfair competition from being undercut by exploitative corporations and regimes?
- 3. Please detail any legal review that was conducted prior to termination. Was grant termination evaluated for consistency with appropriations language or statutory mandates under:
 - a) US-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) implementing legislation, P.L. 116-113?
 - i. This bill provided \$210 million for ILAB: \$180 million over four years for USMCA-related technical assistance projects and \$30 million over eight years for the capacity of ILAB to monitor USMCA compliance, including the necessary expenses of additional full-time ILAB employees for the Interagency Committee and labor attachés in Mexico. Can you confirm whether those appropriated funds are currently being disbursed on schedule, and if not, why not?
 - b) Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2005 and the Frederick Douglass Trafficking Victims Prevention and Protection Reauthorization Act of 2018?
 - c) Section 307 of the Tariff Act of 1930 and the Trade Facilitation and Trade Enforcement Act of 2015?
 - d) Executive Order 13126, "Prohibition of Acquisition of Products Produced by Forced or Indentured Child Labor"?
- 4. Did the Department of Labor consult with the following agencies before the decision to terminate ILAB grants, if so, please provide written or summarized meeting notes or correspondence from the following:
 - a) Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR)
 - b) Customs and Border Protection (CBP)
 - c) Department of State (including the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons or other relevant offices & attachés).
- 5. How will the Department fulfill its labor enforcement obligations under trade agreements such as USMCA and CAFTA-DR in the absence of ILAB's grantmaking, technical assistance/research, and on-the-ground partnerships? How will these same obligations be met with a reduced workforce?
- 6. What alternative plans does DOL have in place to support U.S. businesses and suppliers seeking compliance with laws like the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act?
- 7. Please confirm the number of ILAB staff who have resigned, retired, been reassigned, or been fired since January 2025.

8. How many full-time staff currently remain at ILAB, responsible for:
 - a) Trade agreement labor enforcement with USTR
 - b) Country-specific monitoring and reporting
 - c) Forced labor risk mapping and coordination with CBP
9. What is the current operational budget for ILAB for FY25? Has any unobligated funding been repurposed or rescinded? If so, please identify the amounts and new funding designations.
10. Does the Department intend to revisit the decision to cancel these programs and contracts soon or in future budget cycles?

Impacts on Child Labor Enforcement

1. How many Wage and Hour Division (WHD) field offices have been closed, downsized, or had staffing reductions since January 2025?
2. What is the current number of active child labor investigations being pursued by the Department as of June 2025?
3. What percentage of current WHD investigations involve migrant or undocumented children? Please provide available disaggregated data by industry and state.
4. How many investigators and staff currently specialize in child labor enforcement? Has the number increased or decreased since FY2023 and FY2024?
5. What is the current average caseload per WHD investigator working on child labor violations? How does this compare to previous fiscal years?
6. What is the status of the DOL-HHS interagency taskforce on child labor?
 - a) If it's still active, which offices are involved, and what are its current goals and deliverables?
 - b) If not, what was the reason to dissolve the taskforce, and what are you doing instead to improve interagency coordination and efficacy?
7. Has the Department formally supported any enhancements or modifications to civil or criminal penalty structures under the Fair Labor Standards Act to address child labor violations. Why or why not? What specific statutory changes would the Department recommend to improve deterrence and accountability of unscrupulous employers?
8. What kind of outreach, technical assistance, or enforcement support has DOL provided to local agencies, particularly in states that have experienced substantial increases in child labor violations and/or have rolled back child labor laws?
9. Will the next Solicitor of Labor be directed to prioritize litigation and enforcement of egregious child labor and labor trafficking violations? What directives will be issued to ensure consistent and strong enforcement under the Solicitor's purview?

Rep. Donald Norcross (D-NJ)

1. As the daughter of a Teamster, you know that the right of workers to form a union and collectively bargain is central to improving wages, hours, working conditions, and more. You also know that when workers vote to form a union, they don't immediately reap the benefits of collective bargaining. Instead, they first need to obtain first contract with management who, because the law currently doesn't impose a negotiation deadline, often stall, delay, and drag out negotiations. In fact, according to Bloomberg Law, it takes an average of 458 days for unions and employers to agree on a first contract. This hurts workers who, despite exercising their right to bargain collectively, are prevented from doing so by employers who enjoy the benefits of the status quo. Do you support the idea of a guaranteed first contract?
2. On March 14, 2025, President Trump ordered the dismantling of the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service (FMCS), including firing mediators and staff, and closing field offices across the country. FMCS is a small but vital federal agency responsible for helping to resolve contract negotiations between workers and employers. Do you support reversing the staffing cuts to FMCS, which would enable the agency to continue to provide necessary services including mediation for collective bargaining, grievances, and employment disputes?

Rep. Alma S Adams, PhD (D-NC)

1. Madam Secretary, I have heard you say over and over again that you support workforce development while your administration is cutting critical agencies like the DOL Women's Bureau. In May, you cut a Women in Apprenticeship and Nontraditional Occupations (WANTO) grant just up the road from my district. Hope Renovations in Chapel Hill trained women and nonbinary people for construction jobs, which we need more of in North Carolina. After receiving the grant in 2023, Hope Renovations had the rug pulled from under them by your agency. 35 apprentices and 80 interns will not be able to participate in this program because your agency is more focused on fighting "DEI" than it is on strengthening the American workforce and helping North Carolinians get good-paying jobs.
 - a. Please explain to me, Madam Secretary, how eliminating the Women's Bureau and WANTO grants is going to help the American worker.
2. Federal contractors receive hundreds of billions of taxpayer dollars and employ 20 percent of the nation's workers. This Administration has dismantled the civil rights framework that protected these workers by rescinding President Lyndon Johnson's historic Executive Order 11246 (EO 11246). The proposed budget eliminates the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP) and moves responsibility for enforcing the Vietnam Era Veterans Readjustment Assistance Act and Section 503

of the Rehabilitation Act, which protect veterans and people with disabilities from discrimination, out of OFCCP to other agencies.

I understand that worker complaints related to disability and veteran status discrimination are not actively being worked on and have been paused since OFCCP was ordered to pause enforcement on January 24, 2025— that is over 4 months.

- a. Are claims being processed? Are investigations going forward?
 - b. When does OFCCP expect to begin working on these cases?
 - c. The FY 2026 budget proposes to eliminate OFCCP and transfer those responsibilities elsewhere, do you plan to indefinitely suspend processing claims related to disability and veteran status until they have been transferred out of OFCCP?
 - d. How is this fair for workers? By stopping enforcement, you are **encouraging** contractors to violate their workers' rights!
3. Because OSHA does not have a heat stress standard, the only way the Department can protect workers from extreme heat is to use the General Duty Clause of the OSH Act. But General Duty Clause cases take more time and resources to prove, and your budget appears to be taking resources *away* from OSHA and the Solicitor of Labor.
- a. Your budget request would reduce the FTEs in OSHA's federal enforcement program by 168 people, is that correct?
 - b. Is it correct that dozens of employees in the Solicitor's Office took the "Fork in the Road" offer to leave the Department?
 - c. And your budget projects that the Solicitor's Office will lose 40 additional FTEs, is that correct?
 - d. Madam Secretary, you are reducing the capacity of the Department to protect workers from heat stress at a time when workers need DOL more than ever.

Rep. Suzanne Bonamici (D-OR)

1. **Job Corps:** On May 29th, the Department announced a "phased pause in operations at contractor-operated Job Corps centers nationwide."
 - a. Does the Department of Labor intend to re-open these campuses? If so, when?
 - b. Does the Department intend to revoke the original May 29th directive to pause Job Corps operations? Will you commit to renew these contracts and to continue Job Corps for FY 2025?
 - c. Will the Department of Labor commit to resuming background checks and new student enrollment for the Job Corps program while Job Corps centers remain open? If so, please provide information on the Department's timeline for resuming background checks.
 - d. How will the Department follow the proper procedure to give the public an opportunity to voice concerns about closing Job Corps centers?
 - e. There are approximately 4,481 homeless students in Job Corps, some as young as 16 years old. The Department has said they will provide transportation to get students to their home of record, but these 4,481 students do not have a home to

return to. How will the Department support these students if the TRO is lifted and the “phased pause” moves forward? Where will the Department send these students?

- f. Did the Department factor in additional costs and lost potential if these students remain homeless, need to rely on more government services, or enter the criminal justice system?
 - g. What is the Department doing to support the thousands of Job Corps staff who are now out of a job because of the “pause”?
 - h. What is the Department of Labor doing to connect state and local governments with resources for communities affected by Job Corps closures?
 - i. In announcing the “pause,” the Department of Labor relied on a report that contains disputed facts and conclusions and relied heavily on data from when the program was still recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic. Who were the authors of this report? Please be specific and include whether each person who contributed to the report was assigned to the Department of Labor by DOGE.
 - i. The report states that the cost per graduate at Job Corps is \$155,600, but a report during the first Trump administration, prior to COVID-19, reported the average cost per graduate was \$57,312. Please explain the dramatic discrepancy between these two figures.
 - ii. The report states that Job Corps students are largely hired in minimum wage positions, earning an average of \$16,695 in annualized wages; however, during Program Year (PY) 2023, Job Corps students were placed in jobs earning an average wage of \$17.13 (more than twice the federal minimum wage) and earned annualized wages of more than \$31,000 on average. Please explain the dramatic discrepancy between these two figures.
 - iii. The report states that the Job Corps graduation rate is 38.7%; however, the National Job Corps Association asserts that the current graduation rate is higher, and historically graduation rates have been above 60%. What is the current graduation rate at Job Corps programs?
 - iv. The Department claims that the report shows that Job Corps is no longer achieving its intended outcomes; however, Job Corps graduates exceeded the wage goals set by the Department in PY 2023. Please clarify the outcomes that Job Corps is failing to meet, as well as evidence from accurate and current data.
 - v. Does the Department plan on doing an updated transparency report with more recent and accurate program data that is reflective of the current Job Corps population?
2. **Make America Skilled Again Block Grant:** Last week, the Trump Administration released its plans to cut nearly every workforce development program administered by the Department of Labor and replace these programs with the undefined “Make America Skilled Again” block grant program. These cuts eliminate funding for both the WIOA Youth Formula program and YouthBuild, a program that would logically be a landing spot for displaced Job Corps students.

- a. What workforce development and pre-apprenticeship alternatives will be available to the displaced Job Corps and YouthBuild students?
 - b. What specific pre-apprenticeship and registered apprenticeship opportunities will the Department provide to meet the stated goal of one million new apprenticeships per year?
 - c. The Make America Skilled Again block grant reduces overall funding for the consolidated workforce development programs by \$4.64 billion. What is the justification for these cuts? How will these funds be distributed to states? Which states will lose the most federal funding under the new grant program?
- 3. Women's Bureau:** The president's FY26 budget eliminates the Women's Bureau, calling it an "[ineffective policy office that is a relic of the past](#)." This includes repealing the Women in Apprenticeship and Nontraditional Occupations (WANTO) grant program.
- a. How has the Department determined that the Women's Bureau and its programs are "ineffective"?
 - b. Without the Women's Bureau, how does the Department plan to provide research and support for women in the workforce and address the problems they face, including workplace discrimination, equal pay, paid leave, and child care?
 - i. What is the Department's plan to continue operating the National Database of Childcare Prices, the most comprehensive federal source of child care prices?

Questions for the Record for Lori Chavez-DeRemer

**Committee on Education and Workforce Hearing
“Examining the Policies and Priorities of the Department of Labor”
June 5, 2025**

Chairman Tim Walberg (R-MI)

1. Beginning in 2011, pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs) began to implement formulary exclusions that require patients to pay completely out-of-pocket for a drug or undertake a lengthy appeals or exceptions process. Formulary exclusions have grown 961 percent—from 109 drugs to 1,156 drugs—from 2014-2022. To what extent do formulary exclusions limit patient choice and drug access?

Response:

On April 15, President Donald Trump issued Executive Order (EO) 14273 titled, “Lowering Drug Prices by Once Again Putting Americans First,” to provide access to prescription drugs at lower costs to American patients and taxpayers. The EO directed the Secretary of Labor to, within 180 days, propose regulations pursuant to the Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA) of 1974 to improve employer health plan fiduciary transparency into the direct and indirect compensation received by pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs).

Congress and other Federal agencies have issued multiple reports regarding PBM’s use of perverse formulary practices. In 2019, then-Chairman Chuck Grassley (R-IA) and then-Ranking Member Ron Wyden (D-OR) issued a first of its kind report following a two year investigation exposing, among other things, how rebates, discounts, and fees tied to list price and the increased use of formulary exclusion tactics by PBMs have had unintended consequences on the insulin therapeutic class: list price continued to increase, leading to higher prices at the pharmacy counter for patients.

Since 2019, there has been a concerted effort by Congress and other Federal agencies to examine PBM business practices including the use of formulary exclusion tactics. The Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 directed the Federal Trade Commission to initiate a 6(b) study into the use of rebate walls to block competition from new branded therapies, biosimilars, generics, and other innovative products. In May 2021, the FTC issued a report based solely on publicly available information and indicated that such practice could raise antitrust concerns. In June 2022, the FTC issued a policy statement explaining, that among other things, “rebates and fees may shift costs and misalign incentives in a way that ultimately increases patients’ costs and stifles competition from lower-costs drugs, especially when generics and biosimilars are excluded or disfavored on formularies.”

In July 2024, the FTC issued an interim staff report highlighting the use of formulary exclusion tactics, finding some rebate contracts explicitly excluded generics and biosimilars, favoring high-list, high-rebate branded alternatives. This tactic impacts patients in two ways. First, a patient’s out-of-pocket cost obligations may be higher if the patient is required to take the branded drug product. Second, cash patients, including uninsured, lack meaningful access to affordable medicines. And third, exclusionary rebates may have negative spillover effects on the market as a whole, limiting generic drug companies’ ability to get more patient uptake.

2. When PBMs' compensation is tied to the list price of a medicine, this can lead to PBMs disfavoring generic or lower-priced brand competitors. PBMs continuously say that lowering drug costs for patients is a top priority. Would you consider reviewing a reform idea that would break the link between PBM compensation and the list price of medicines to benefit patients in meaningful ways, such as through increased coverage of lower cost alternatives such as generics or biosimilars?

Response:

The Department would welcome any opportunity to collaborate with Congress on ways to lower prescription drug prices for the American worker.

3. On May 15, 2025, the Departments of Health and Human Services, Labor (DOL), and Treasury (Tri-Agencies) issued a statement announcing they will not enforce the 2024 *Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act* Final Rule. The non-enforcement is in response to a legal challenge by the ERISA Industry Committee regarding the lawfulness of the 2024 rule and is expected to remain in place for at least 18 months after a final decision in the lawsuit. According to the non-enforcement policy, the Tri-Agencies are reexamining the broader parity enforcement approach.

Aspects of mental health and substance use disorder law and regulations remain overly complex and technical. As a result, compliance has become a moving target through a patchwork of unclear and often conflicting guidance. The proliferation of differing compliance approaches, tools, and interpretations has led to confusion and strains on government, health plan, employer, and provider resources. Will you commit to working with health plans, employers, and other interested stakeholders to streamline the parity compliance process?

Response:

Yes. On September 9, 2024, the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services (HHS), and the Treasury (the Departments) issued a final rule titled "Requirements Related to the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act," (2024 Final Rule). On January 17, 2025, the ERISA Industry Committee (ERIC) filed suit in the U.S. District Court of the District of Columbia challenging certain provisions of the 2024 Final Rule on multiple grounds, including on grounds that they are arbitrary and capricious and contrary to law. Additionally, Executive Order 14219, titled "Ensuring Lawful Governance and Implementing the President's 'Department of Government Efficiency' Deregulatory Initiative," directs federal agencies to review regulations to identify those that may undermine the national interest, including by imposing undue burdens on small businesses or significant costs upon private parties that are not outweighed by public benefits. In such cases, federal agencies must exercise enforcement discretion to ensure lawful governance. The lawsuit is in abeyance while the Departments reconsider the 2024 Final Rule, including whether to issue a notice of proposed rulemaking rescinding or modifying the regulation through notice and comment rulemaking.

MHPAEA provides critical protections for workers, individuals, and their families who need treatment for mental health conditions and substance use disorders. During this period of nonenforcement of the 2024 Final Rule as the Departments revisit the Rule, the Departments remain

committed to ensuring that individuals receive protection under the law in a way that is not unduly burdensome for plans and issuers.

4. The President has promised “radical price transparency,” and I hope to see new regulations soon requiring group health plans that are subject to the *Employee Retirement Income Security Act* to finally let patients know what the price tag will be for their trip to the hospital or just a routine doctor’s visit. This initial price for patients before they go to the doctor is called an “advance explanation of benefits” and has been the law since the end of 2020. Can you update us on where these new regulations stand at the Employee Benefits Security Administration?

Response:

The Department is committed to fulfilling the President’s promise to deliver radical price transparency in healthcare. The spring regulatory agenda, published on September 4, 2025, indicates that a proposed rule will be issued by April 2026. Advanced Explanation of Benefits (AEOB) implementation is a priority for the Department, and we have been working with the Departments of Health and Human Services and the Treasury as well as interested industry stakeholders on the technical aspects of potential data transmission standards. This work informs the development of regulations that are operationally feasible for plans and providers and meet consumer expectations and needs.

5. The tree care industry continues to rank among the most hazardous in the country, with a fatality rate that far exceeds the national average. At the same time, it plays a vital role in protecting critical infrastructure—maintaining powerlines and roadways, supporting wildfire prevention, and responding to hurricanes, winter storms, and other disasters. Despite these responsibilities and risks, there is still no dedicated Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) standard tailored to the unique hazards of tree care operations. Instead, employers must navigate a patchwork of general industry standards that were not designed for arboricultural work. This fragmented regulatory approach creates confusion, results in inconsistent enforcement, and ultimately undermines safety for workers performing essential public-facing services. During the first Trump administration, OSHA completed the *Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act* panel process for a tree care operations standard. That process produced strong recommendations and a clear path for advancing the rule. However, the Biden administration repeatedly delayed publication of a proposed rule, despite longstanding bipartisan calls for action. At a May 2025 hearing before the Subcommittee on Workforce Protections, Members of Congress again raised concerns about this delay and heard testimony emphasizing that a properly crafted standard would not impose new regulatory burdens. Rather, it would replace the current patchwork with clear, practical requirements—consolidating and improving existing regulations to better protect workers in this high-risk field.

- a. Does DOL consider completion of a tree care operations standard a priority?

Response:

OSHA first published an Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (ANPRM) in 2008. The standard remains an agency priority, and the Spring 2025 Regulatory Agenda projects that the agency will publish a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) in April 2026.

- b. What steps are being taken to move this standard forward?

Response:

Internal OSHA experts and leadership are currently reviewing this issue and determining the best path forward.

6. OSHA's injury and illness recordkeeping system, including its recordability criteria, was established in 1971. Do you believe it would be prudent to evaluate the OSHA injury and illness recordkeeping to ensure they appropriately meet the needs of today's employers and workers?

Response:

Among other things, the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970 (the OSH Act) required OSHA to issue regulations requiring employers to "maintain accurate records of, and to make periodic reports on, work-related deaths, injuries and illnesses other than minor injuries requiring only first aid treatment and which do not involve medical treatment, loss of consciousness, restriction of work or motion, or transfer to another job." 29 U.S.C. § 657(c)(2). Soon after Congress passed the OSH Act, OSHA issued the required occupational injury and illness recording and reporting regulations as 29 CFR part 1904, and since 1971, OSHA and the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) have operated the injury and illness recordkeeping system as a cooperative effort. However, OSHA has revisited the requirements contained in that regulation a number of times over the past fifty years, including comprehensively reviewing the recordkeeping criteria.

In addition, OSHA has updated its guidance to employers on recordkeeping throughout the years to account for changes in the modern online workplace. The timely recordkeeping of injury and illness information is required for collection and maintenance by most employers on the OSHA 300 logs, with partial exemptions for very small employers and those in low-hazard industries. It is beneficial to employers and workers alike, as it allows for the tracking of safety performance and identification of hazards, injury trends, and corrections that may need to be made to prevent further similar injuries and ensure a safe and healthy workplace.

7. Physical therapy treatment, when delivered for work-related injuries, is currently classified as medical treatment, triggering its recordability under OSHA reporting requirements. Despite physical therapy's advantages, the current system inadvertently discourages proactive injury prevention, ergonomic intervention, and rehabilitation by penalizing employers and employees for pursuing recovery or prevention through physical therapy. Would you be willing to evaluate rescinding physical therapy intervention as an OSHA recordable event to ensure U.S. workers are receiving low-cost, highly effective intervention for injury prevention and recovery while concurrently reducing the administrative burden of U.S. employers?

Response:

Physical therapy itself is not a recordable event. Rather, a work-related illness or injury is recordable if it results in death, days away from work, restricted work or transfer to another job, *medical treatment beyond first aid*, or loss of consciousness, and OSHA considers physical therapy to be “medical treatment beyond first aid.” 29 CFR 1904.7(a); 29 CFR 1904.7(b)(5)(ii)(M). Thus, if a work-related illness or injury is treated with physical therapy, then that illness or injury meets OSHA’s general recording criteria. See 29 CFR 1904.7. OSHA has reviewed and considered the request to rescind its classification of physical therapy treatment as “medical treatment beyond first aid” under OSHA’s Recordkeeping regulation. However, as the agency has consistently explained, the exception for “first aid” treatment is intended to capture situations where treatment is applied to address “truly minor injuries and illnesses.” 66 FR 5916, 5984. As the agency stated in the Recordkeeping final rule in 2001, physical therapy is often used to treat more serious injuries and therefore rises to the level of medical treatment beyond first aid. 66 FR at 5992. Physical therapy for purely precautionary purposes (*i.e.*, physical therapy which is purely preventative in the absence of a triggering illness or injury) is not considered medical treatment under OSHA’s recordkeeping rule, which requires the recording of work-related illnesses and injuries.

8. Enacted in 1927, the *Federal Longshore and Harbor Workers’ Compensation Act* (Longshore Act) provides for the payment of compensation, medical care, and vocational rehabilitation services to employees disabled from on-the-job injuries that occur on the navigable waters of the United States, or in adjoining areas customarily used in the loading, unloading, repairing, or building of a vessel. The Longshore Act (through the *Defense Base Act*) also applies to employees of companies performing Department of Defense contracts.

Under current law, the Longshore Act holds employers that are subject to it responsible for hearing loss that occurred before and after employment, as well as loss caused by non-work-related employment or loss due to the natural aging process. However, OSHA and most state-level workers’ compensation laws permit a reduction in claims value based on age-related hearing loss. Will DOL consider a review of its administration of the Longshore Act for the purposes of updating its processes and recommending to Congress any legislative changes it considers necessary?

Response:

Under the Longshore and Harbor Workers’ Compensation Act (LHWCA), workers who suffer hearing loss due to occupational noise exposure in covered maritime employment are entitled to compensation. While there is no statutory provision for apportioning hearing loss between occupational and non-occupational causes (*e.g.*, aging or prior non-covered employment), the LHWCA allows employers to seek partial reimbursement from the Special Fund if the worker has pre-existing hearing loss and certain conditions are met. Any shift toward an apportionment model found in some state-level workers’ compensation laws would require a statutory change.

9. On April 23, the President signed an executive order affirming that his administration is committed to utilizing apprenticeships to expand the American workforce—including directing DOL to submit plans by this summer to facilitate enrolling at least 1 million new apprentices. One of the tools to support apprenticeship programs has been the use of “industry intermediaries” which allow sectors to tailor programs and outreach based on

practical knowledge and the specific needs of its employers. What role will intermediaries play in DOL's overall plans to support and expand apprenticeship programs?

Response:

The Department is committed to expanding Registered Apprenticeship programs and believes that our key partnerships with industry are crucial to this expansion. The Department currently partners with 15 industry intermediaries to expand the use of Registered Apprenticeship in a wide variety of sectors, including supply chain automation, nanotechnology and semiconductors, information technology (IT), cybersecurity, healthcare, advanced manufacturing, logistics, hospitality, and the energy sector.

These intermediaries support Registered Apprenticeships in these industries, including, but not limited to, the following activities:

- Assisting employers in developing high quality Registered Apprenticeship standards for new programs.
- Providing subject matter expertise on apprentice recruitment strategies, including leveraging partnerships and other resources that help bring employers together to build a talent pipeline that helps growing sectors stay competitive in today's global economy.
- Providing incentive funding to employers and their related training partners to offset the costs of developing, launching, and sustaining Registered Apprenticeship programs.
- Conducting outreach to employers, unions, educators and others to promote Registered Apprenticeship and increase awareness of the value and strong Return on Investment of Registered Apprenticeships.
- Implementing industry-driven strategies to expand Registered Apprenticeship opportunities across growing sectors.
- Providing technical assistance on strategies and promising practices that lead to successful placement and retention in Registered Apprenticeship opportunities.

The Department is continuing to work with these industry intermediaries and is exploring new fields, including artificial intelligence (AI), where industry intermediaries could be considered to help meet the 1 million apprentice goal and align with President Trump's recent [Executive Order on Advancing Artificial Intelligence Education for American Youth](#).

In July, President Trump also released his AI policy strategy, "[Winning the Race: America's AI Action Plan](#)", which illustrates how American workers will be central to the Trump Administration's AI policy and outlines the Department's integral role in creating a future-ready workforce. The plan prioritizes AI skills development as a core objective of workforce funding streams, including apprenticeships, partners with education and workforce system stakeholders to expand early career exposure programs and pre-apprenticeship opportunities for middle and high school students in AI infrastructure occupations, and expand Registered Apprenticeships for occupations critical to AI infrastructure. We appreciate your interest and continued support of Registered Apprenticeship Programs.

Rep. Glenn “GT” Thompson (R-PA)

1. Madam Secretary, can you explain how you see career and technical education (CTE) playing a role in achieving the President’s Executive Order on Preparing Americans for High-Paying, Skilled Trade Jobs of the Future, including increasing pre-apprenticeships and registered apprenticeships through CTE programs?

Response:

In August, the Department, in coordination with the Departments of Commerce and Education, released a comprehensive worker investment and development strategy, “[America’s Talent Strategy: Building the Workforce for the Golden Age](#)”, to implement the Executive Order. The Department also recently announced the implementation of an Interagency Agreement with the Department of Education to create an integrated federal education and workforce system, with the Department of Labor taking on a greater role in administering CTE programs. The Department looks forward to sharing progress with Congress on efforts to align CTE with workforce development programs to advance career awareness, modern work-based learning models, employer-validated credentials, and CTE alignment with the skills needed to enter Registered Apprenticeships.

Rep. Glenn Grothman (R-WI)

1. Secretary Chavez-DeRemer, OSHA’s proposed rule adopts a one- size-fits-all approach to heat illness and injury prevention, applying identical requirements across indoor and outdoor environments and across all sectors, including agriculture, construction, and manufacturing, without differentiation. This broad application fails to consider critical distinctions in worksite conditions, tasks performed, or industry-specific risks. How does OSHA justify imposing identical obligations on such a broad and diverse range of workplaces, regardless of differences in work tasks, physical environments, industry risks, or business size? Shouldn’t the final rule recognize and account for the distinct operational realities of sectors where heat is a controlled byproduct of indoor production rather than an ambient environmental exposure?

Response:

OSHA is currently in the middle of the rulemaking process with respect to the Heat Injury and Illness Prevention in Outdoor and Indoor Work Settings proposed rule. OSHA received over 40,000 comments in response to the proposal and heard from nearly 300 participants during an informal hearing on the proposal, which was held from June 16 through July 2. Individuals who submitted a Notice of Intention to Appear before the hearing can participate in the post-hearing comment period, which is open until September 30, 2025. These individuals can file additional evidence and data relevant to the proceeding, including written responses to questions asked during hearing proceedings, as well as final written briefs at [regulations.gov](#). At the close of this comment period, OSHA will consider all of the comments and testimony that have been provided through the heat rulemaking process and will determine the best path forward.

2. Secretary Chavez-DeRemer, the proposed rule’s rigid acclimatization requirements are another example of its inflexible, one-size-fits-all approach. Mandating a specific phase-in schedule for all new or returning workers, regardless of industry, workforce

composition, or existing safety practices, fails to recognize how acclimatization is already effectively managed in controlled indoor environments like manufacturing. For example, many manufacturing facilities already use tailored onboarding, cross-training, and seasonal protocols to manage exposure. OSHA needs to address the operational and financial burdens this inflexible framework imposes on manufacturing sectors, where staffing challenges and continuous operations leave little room for a rigid acclimatization schedule. Shouldn't OSHA consider allowing employer-determined acclimatization protocols that still meet the rule's safety objectives but offer greater flexibility based on industry context?

Response:

OSHA is currently in the middle of the rulemaking process with respect to the Heat Injury and Illness Prevention in Outdoor and Indoor Work Settings proposed rule. OSHA received over 40,000 comments in response to the proposal and heard from nearly 300 participants during an informal hearing on the proposal, which was held from June 16 through July 2. Individuals who submitted a Notice of Intention to Appear before the hearing can participate in the post-hearing comment period, which is open until September 30, 2025. These individuals can file additional evidence and data relevant to the proceeding, including written responses to questions asked during hearing proceedings, as well as final written briefs at [regulations.gov](https://www.regulations.gov). At the close of this comment period, OSHA will consider all of the comments and testimony that have been provided through the heat rulemaking process and will determine the best path forward.

3. The Federal government has an obligation to effectively manage taxpayer dollars and ensure all Federal programs are efficient and mission driven. The Job Corps Program is no exception. As part of the *A Stronger Workforce for America Act* (ASWA), Congress and Job Corps stakeholders have proposed several reforms to the Job Corps program estimated to save the taxpayer tens of millions of dollars per year and unlock key partnerships with our nation's top employers. Reforms would also address concerns identified by the Department of Labor's Job Corps transparency report.

Response:

The Department appreciates Congress's focus on strengthening workforce outcomes for young people and acknowledges the reform principles reflected in the *A Stronger Workforce for America Act*. The Department remains committed to working with Congress to ensure that any path forward for Job Corps prioritizes accountability, transparency, and ensuring the best possible outcomes for students.

4. Secretary Chavez-DeRemer, does the Department of Labor support the reforms to the Job Corps Program proposed as part of the *A Stronger Workforce for America Act* (ASWA) in the 118th Congress?

Response:

The Department appreciates Congress's focus on strengthening workforce outcomes for young people and acknowledges the reform principles reflected in the *A Stronger Workforce for America Act*. The Department remains committed to working with Congress to ensure that any path forward for Job Corps prioritizes accountability, transparency, cost effectiveness, and ensuring the best

possible outcomes for students.

5. Secretary Chavez-DeRemer, would the Department of Labor support an extension of the Job Corps Program to allow for meaningful reforms to take effect?

Response:

If Congress reauthorizes the Job Corps program, the Department will implement meaningful reforms that improve the effectiveness, efficiency, and fiscal integrity of the Job Corps program. The Department will welcome the opportunity to provide technical assistance and to inform any transition or reform efforts and to ensure that any changes prioritize outcomes for students and responsible stewardship of taxpayer funds.

6. Secretary Chavez-DeRemer, Obama-Biden policies required Job Corps students who have a high school diploma to participate in remedial classes until they test on the Test of Adult Basic Education that they are effectively “college-ready.” But most of these students enrolled to get a trade education and become an electrician or a welder, not go to college. How much has Job Corps student attrition increased and graduation rates decreased because of these misguided Obama-Biden policies?

Response:

Under the *Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)*, a “graduate” is defined as a student who, as a result of participation in Job Corps, either receives a secondary school diploma or equivalent, or completes the requirements of a career and technical education program that prepares them for employment or postsecondary education (see WIOA Section 142(5)). This statutory definition reinforces the importance of both academic and technical achievement as valid pathways to success.

While the Department does not collect data focused narrowly on the impact of specific past academic policies on attrition or graduation rates, the Department continues to evaluate the balance between academic instruction and career training to ensure students are not unnecessarily delayed from entering the workforce. Our focus remains on equipping students with the credentials, skills, and opportunities needed to achieve economic self-sufficiency.

Rep. Elise Stefanik (R-NY)

1. Upstate New York and North Country farmers that utilize the H-2A program in my district consistently express the devastating impact the Biden Administration inflicted on family farms across America due to the March 2023 DOL Adverse Effect Wage Rate methodology final rule. This new methodology has resulted in skyrocketing wages and has created a massive administrative burden for farmers who use the program. Secretary Chavez-DeRemer, what steps is your department taking to ensure that wage determinations under the H-2A program are not placing an unsustainable burden on farmers who are already operating on razor-thin margins?

Response:

The Department understands that agricultural employers play a vital role in our nation's economy, and their ability to obtain a reliable workforce is critical to producing the U.S. food supply. The Department is committed to the effective administration of the H-2A temporary agricultural visa program and the protection of American workers. The Department's H-2A program regulations currently require an H-2A employer to offer, advertise in its recruitment, and pay a wage that is at least the highest of the Adverse Effect Wage Rate (AEWR), the prevailing wage, the collectively bargained wage rate, the Federal minimum wage, or the State minimum wage. The Department is aware of concerns raised by many agricultural producers and associations that the Biden Administration's 2023 AEWR Final Rule contains provisions which can lead to higher AEWR rates being assigned for certain job duties, such as driving tractor trailer trucks, irrespective of how often such duties are performed. The Department is sensitive to those concerns and understands the importance of AEWR rates to American farmers and ranchers seeking a reliable and legal workforce.

As the Department has announced, <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/foreign-labor/news>, in response to litigation challenging the 2023 AEWR final rule, on August 25, 2025, the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Louisiana issued an order vacating the rule. As a result of this vacatur, until the Department develops a new AEWR methodology, it will set AEWR rates under the methodology set forth in the 2010 H-2A rule. As is noted in the recently released Spring Regulatory Agenda, DOL intends to issue a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking to revise the AEWR methodology for H-2A workers.

More broadly, the Department is actively collaborating with other federal agency partners, including the Department of Agriculture, to examine possible reforms that can improve the H-2A program in a manner that better balances the competing goals of providing U.S. employers with a needed workforce while preventing adverse effect on workers in the United States similarly employed. The Department has already made several recent policy and programmatic changes to facilitate use of the program. For example, the Department has temporarily suspended the fee it collects for certified H-2A labor certification applications, <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2025-07-31/pdf/2025-14510.pdf>; is changing policy to account for an H-2A employer's staggered dates of need, <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2025-08-25/pdf/2025-15653.pdf>; and is collaborating with other federal partners on technology-based solutions to make use of the program simpler and less burdensome.

2. Do I have your commitment to address a long-term solution regarding the Adverse Effect Wage Rate and reverse the methodology that took effect in March 2023?

Response:

Yes, the Department is committed to continuing to work with Congress and our federal agency partners to address concerns raised by stakeholders concerning the rising Adverse Effect Wage Rate (AEWR) and its impact on the agricultural sector, especially for employers in labor-intensive specialty crop operations.

As the Department has announced, <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/foreign-labor/news>, in response to litigation challenging the 2023 AEWR final rule, on August 25, 2025, the U.S. District

Court for the Western District of Louisiana issued an order vacating the rule. As a result of this vacatur, until the Department develops a new AEWR methodology, it will set AEWR rates under the methodology set forth in the 2010 H-2A rule. As is noted in the recently released Spring Regulatory Agenda, DOL intends to issue a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking to revise the AEWR methodology for H-2A workers. The Department remains cognizant of employers' need for longer-term certainty with respect to H-2A wages. Therefore, it is actively exploring new AEWR methodologies that carefully balance the workforce needs of agricultural employers with the Department's statutory mandate to protect the wages and working conditions of agricultural workers in the United States.

3. Many farmers in my district have expressed concern that the soaring Adverse Effect Wage Rate increases are not only hurting their ability to hire employees but are also making it nearly impossible to compete globally. Has your department conducted a cost-benefit analysis on the long-term consequences of these wildly elevated wage hikes for U.S. agricultural competitiveness?

Response:

The Department is aware of concerns raised by many agricultural producers and associations that the AEWRs have substantially increased in recent years and that the Biden Administration's 2023 AEWR Final Rule contains provisions which can lead to even higher minimum wages for certain job duties, such as driving tractor trailer trucks, irrespective of how often such duties are performed. The Department is sensitive to those concerns and understands the importance of AEWR rates to American farmers and ranchers seeking a reliable and legal workforce. The Department is committed to addressing the concern of increasing year-over-year AEWR rates within the authority granted to the Department by Congress. To that end, in addition to implementing the recent vacatur of the 2023 AEWR rule—a rule that raised strong concerns among many farmers and growers—the Department is actively collaborating with other federal agencies, including the Department of Agriculture, to examine possible reforms that can improve the broader H-2A program in a manner that balances workforce needs of agricultural employers with the Department's statutory mandate to protect the wages and working conditions of agricultural workers in the United States.

The Department has already made several recent policy and programmatic changes to facilitate use of the program. For example, the Department has temporarily suspended the fee it collects for certified H-2A labor certification applications, <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2025-07-31/pdf/2025-14510.pdf>; is changing policy to account for an H-2A employer's staggered dates of need, <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2025-08-25/pdf/2025-15653.pdf>; and is collaborating with other federal partners on technology-based solutions to make use of the program simpler and less burdensome.

4. During my over decade-long career in Congress, I have continuously advocated for our hardworking New York dairy farmers to have access to the H-2A program. Secretary Chavez-DeRemer, are you willing to work with Congress on tweaking our agricultural worker visa program to allow for year-round visas?

Response:

Under the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA), an employer must establish a need for agricultural services or labor to be performed in the United States on a seasonal or temporary basis.

The Department has heard from many agricultural employers, especially in the dairy and meat processing industries, that this statutory requirement, which is regulated by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), does not address the persistent shortage of U.S. workers in their industries. The Department is sensitive to these concerns and actively collaborating with other federal agencies, including DHS and the Department of Agriculture, to examine possible reforms that can improve the H-2A program for employers and is prepared to work with Congress to explore potential revisions to the INA that governs eligibility for the H-2A program.

Rep. Rick Allen (R-GA)

1. Experts recognize that misaligned incentives in the drug payment system encourage PBMs to favor medicines with high list prices and larger manufacturer rebates or discounts. However, when PBMs faced criticism over this dynamic, they shifted their compensation models to focus on administrative or other fees, which are still tied to list prices. Isn't this just reshuffling the same flawed incentives? Would delinking PBM compensation from the list price of drugs—so they're paid a flat service fee rather than a percentage of rebates or list prices—help eliminate the incentive to prioritize higher-cost drugs?

Response:

The Department would welcome any opportunity to collaborate with Congress on ways to lower prescription drug prices for the American worker.

2. Alternative funding programs (AFPs) are programs that employers use that involve contracting with vendor to target commercially insured patients taking targeted drugs to shift the cost of covering prescription drugs to third-parties such as patient support and assistance programs. Do you believe that AFPs often lead to lapses in care for individuals with chronic and/or high-cost conditions? Do you believe that employers are aware of the danger AFPs can cause their employees, whether through delayed access to prescription drugs or downright denials?

Response:

Alternative funding programs (AFPs), also known as specialty carve-out programs, aim to reduce employer costs by utilizing pharmaceutical manufacturer's patient assistance programs for high-cost specialty drugs. While AFPs pose significant issues, like delayed access to prescription drugs, it is the Department's view that AFPs are a symptom of broader problems in healthcare—the high costs of specialty drugs. Specialty drugs typically address chronic illnesses, like cancer and arthritis, and represent a significant percentage of an employer's overall pharmacy costs. The Department is committed to lowering drug costs for the American worker and would welcome an opportunity to engage with Congress on policy solutions.

3. President Trump's Executive Order issued on May 12 directed the Department of Labor (DOL) to issue regulations on prohibited transactions, which would require PBMs to disclose information regarding how they are compensated? How can DOL leverage those regulations to protect employers and employees from non-transparent fees that PBMs extract?

Response:

On April 15, President Donald Trump issued Executive Order (EO) 14273 titled, “Lowering Drug Prices by Once Again Putting Americans First,” to provide access to prescription drugs at lower costs to American patients and taxpayers— putting Americans first and making America healthy again. The EO directed the Secretary of Labor, via the Employee Benefits Security Administration (EBSA) to, within 180 days, propose regulations pursuant to the Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA) to improve employer health plan fiduciary transparency into the direct and indirect compensation received by pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs). EBSA is fully engaged and committed to carrying out this directive as expeditiously as possible.

Rep. Burgess Owens (R-UT)

1. Research from Credential Engine has identified more than one million credentials—from degrees and certificates to badges and licenses—currently available in the U.S. labor market. Yet employers, educators, students, and workers still lack a clear, standardized way to understand what these credentials actually mean—what skills they represent, how they align with workforce demands, or whether they translate into better jobs and earnings.

At the same time, there is growing interest in modernizing our approach to workforce data through tools like Learning and Employment Records, which can help individuals more easily verify and communicate their competencies throughout their careers. But without consistent, transparent credential data, these innovations won’t fulfill their promise.

Can you speak to how improving credential transparency—particularly the use of structured, comparable, and open data about the content and value of credentials—can support skills-based hiring, empower workers to better signal their skills, and enhance the impact of tools like LERs in the workforce development system?

Response:

Increased transparency includes providing data not only on credential attainment but also on various credentials’ labor market value. These elements are important to help inform workers’ choices and improve learning and employment records. The Department publishes open data on all eligible training providers, including the credential offered, currently at trainingproviderresults.gov. The Department is working to improve the quality of the eligible training provider data submitted by states to enhance transparency around participant outcomes and credentials offered by all training providers that receive funding through the public workforce system. The Department will also strengthen oversight and guidance to States to ensure state Eligible Training Provider Lists (ETPLs) reflect training programs that demonstrate real economic value to workers, while making it easier for these effective programs to establish eligibility across state lines. The Department also makes open data on occupational information, and associated credentials, available through www.onetonline.org. Lastly, the Department requires grantees that develop credentials, such as Strengthening Community Colleges grantees, to make information about their credentials available through open, linked, and interoperable data formats.

The Department, in partnership with the Departments of Commerce and Education, will also develop a public Credentials of Value scorecard that enables employers, job seekers, career coaches, and other workforce stakeholders to compare education and training programs based on quality assurance criteria including labor market outcomes, cost, duration, and credential type. The Department will review ongoing state and private sector initiatives to inform the creation of the scorecard and believes it could integrate wage record data and credential transparency efforts to support informed decision-making by workforce stakeholders.

2. In its 2021 FLSA worker classification rule, the Department of Labor included an example specific to the trucking industry. With this example, the Department clarified that a motor carrier requiring an independent contractor to use a device that limits their truck's speed would not affect the trucker's classification, and would not indicate control by the motor carrier, because this requirement is "implemented in order to comply with specific legal obligations and to enhance safety."

This example seems to conflict with the Department of Transportation's approach to speed limiting technology on trucks. Over the past 15 years, DOT has been considering a mandate requiring speed limiting devices in trucks, but has never issued a specific requirement or regulation to do so. Right now, there is no specific legal obligation to use a speed limiting device on a truck. In fact, it seems unlikely that DOT under President Trump would move forward on a speed limiter mandate due to safety concerns expressed by America's truckers.

As you and the Department are considering revisions to FLSA worker classification regulations, would you defer to the Department of Transportation's determinations on what is safe and required for the operation of heavy-duty trucks, specifically with regard to the use of speed limiters?

Response:

The Department replaced the 2021 rule with a different rule in 2024. In ongoing litigation challenging the 2024 rule, the Department has informed courts that it is reconsidering the 2024 rule, including whether to rescind it. If the Department decides to engage in further rulemaking related to FLSA independent contractor classification status, the Department will seek technical assistance from other interested Departments where appropriate.

3. On April 23, 2025, President Trump issued an Executive Order directing the Departments of Labor, Education, and Commerce to identify alternatives to four-year degrees that align with employers' skill needs. With over 400,000 open construction jobs and 40% of the workforce expected to retire within a decade, expanding access to skilled trades is more urgent than ever.

How is the Department of Labor advancing this Executive Order to help more Americans enter these high-demand, well-paying careers?

Response:

The Department of Labor is collaborating with the Departments of Education and Commerce to

implement the Executive Order to help ensure more workers enter high-demand, well-paying careers including by enhancing Registered Apprenticeships in skilled trades to meet and surpass 1 million active apprentices across industries, including construction. As of Q2 FY 2025, there are 451,650 apprentices in construction-related programs, a 38 percent increase since FY 2020, demonstrating their critical role in addressing workforce needs. Additionally, since the start of the current Administration, the Department has invested nearly \$120 million in grants and cooperative agreements to expand Registered Apprenticeships, with nearly \$84 million awarded to states in June 2025 to increase program capacity and support skilled trades, including construction.

Ranking Member Robert C. “Bobby” Scott (D-VA)

- 1) The Department of Labor has the statutory requirement under Section 503 of the *Rehabilitation Act* (Section 503) and the *Vietnam Era Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act* (VEVRAA) to enforce anti-discrimination requirements with regards to federal contract workers who have disabilities and/or veteran status. Under the first Trump Administration, OFCCP successfully initiated focused reviews under Section 503 and VEVRAA to ensure that federal contractors were providing equal employment opportunities and complying with requirements of these statutes.¹
 - a. What is OFCCP currently doing to ensure that it is meeting its statutory requirements to ensure that federal contract workers are not being discriminated against on the basis of disability and/or veteran status?

Response:

The Department of Labor is committed to carrying out the statutory functions which Congress has currently assigned to the Department to investigate and enforce Section 503 and VEVRAA. OFCCP is currently carrying out the statutorily required functions under those laws, including investigating complaints filed under these laws. OFCCP will continue to provide information and assistance to federal contractors so that they can better understand their obligations under these laws.

- b. Is OFCCP currently conducting any compliance evaluations or other enforcement activity to ensure federal contractors are meeting their responsibilities under Section 503 and VEVRAA?

Response:

OFCCP is currently carrying out the statutorily required functions delegated to it under Section 503 and VEVRAA, including investigating complaints filed under the laws.

- i. If so, please provide a description of enforcement activities OFCCP is currently conducting with regards to enforcing Section 503 and VEVRAA.

Response:

As of January 31, 2025, any components of reviews or investigations of claims based on Executive Order 11246 were closed, and any and all reviews or investigations of claims based on Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, 29 U.S.C. § 793 (Section 503), and/or the Vietnam

¹ https://edworkforce.house.gov/uploadedfiles/craig_leen_-_testimony.pdf.
<https://www.dol.gov/newsroom/releases/ofccp/ofccp20201019-0>

Era Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act of 1974, as amended, 38 U.S.C. § 4212 (VEVRAA), were held in abeyance pending further guidance. On July 1, 2025, pursuant to Secretary's Order 08-2025, the abeyance on Section 503 and VEVRAA activities was lifted. Any VEVRAA and Section 503 complaints held in abeyance, as well as new complaints under those statutes, are being processed by OFCCP. Because OFCCP's compliance review format significantly entangled E.O. 11246 reviews with reviews of Section 503 and/or VEVRAA compliance, OFCCP exercised its discretion to administratively close all pending compliance reviews and will take no further action related to the scheduling list released in November 2024.

- ii. If not, please provide an explanation as to why these enforcement activities are not occurring.

Response:

See above.

- c. How many complaints alleging discrimination under Section 503 or VEVRAA have been filed with OFCCP since January 20, 2025?

Response:

As of July 18, 2025, there are 224 complaints alleging discrimination under Section 503 or VEVRAA that have been filed with OFCCP since January 20, 2025.

- d. How many active cases related to claims under Section 503 and VEVRAA are currently being investigated by OFCCP?

Response:

As of July 18, 2025, OFCCP has begun the process to restart investigations following Secretary's Order 08-2025 issued on July 1, 2025, which lifted the abeyance on all activities related to Section 503 and VEVRAA. As part of that process, OFCCP is ascertaining which of the complaints held in abeyance with Section 503 and VEVRAA allegations satisfy the criteria to proceed to an investigation.

- e. Are workers receiving timely responses and updates regarding the status of their filed claims? What information has been shared with workers who have filed claims about the processing of their claims?

Response:

Yes, all complainants who have filed complaints containing Section 503 and VEVRAA allegations have been notified that OFCCP has begun processing these complaints. Each complainant received a letter with OFCCP contact information which informed them that:

On January 21, 2025, President Donald J. Trump issued Executive Order 14173, entitled "[Ending Illegal Discrimination and Restoring Merit-Based Opportunity](#)," which revoked Executive Order 11246. On January 24, 2025, U.S. Department of Labor Acting Secretary Vince Micone, through

Secretary's Order 03-2025, directed the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP) to cease and desist all investigative and enforcement activity under Executive Order 11246 and to notify all impacted regulated parties that complaint investigations and compliance reviews under Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 503), as amended, and the Vietnam Era Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act of 1974 (VEVRAA), as amended, are being held in abeyance pending further guidance. OFCCP's records indicate that you either had a complaint containing allegations under Section 503 and/or VEVRAA pending at that time or that you subsequently filed one. This letter serves as notice that the abeyance has been lifted and that OFCCP is processing your complaint.

If your complaint contains allegations based on Executive Order 11246, please note that pursuant to Executive Order 14173, OFCCP no longer has any authority to investigate these allegations and any aspect of the complaint or open investigation pertaining to Executive Order 11246 will be closed with no further action taken.

- 2) The President's FY 2026 budget proposes to eliminate OFCCP and move the responsibility for the enforcement of Section 503 and VEVRAA to other agencies. Under this proposal, what is the plan for the remaining OFCCP staff after any transfer?

Response:

Should Congress enact the President's FY 2026 budget proposal for OFCCP, the Department will engage in deliberative discussions on this issue.

- 3) Please provide the following information regarding staffing numbers for OFCCP:
- Number of current staff, broken down by office location, who are not on administrative leave;

Response:

LOCATION	DESCR	CITY	STATE	Count
CO0054	CESAR E. CHAVEZ MEMORIAL BLDG	DENVER	CO	4
DC0116	FRANCES PERKINS BLDG	WASHINGTON	DC	15
GA0500	SAM NUNN - ALABAMA ST SW	ATLANTA	GA	1
GAV052	SAM NUNN - FORSYTH ST	ATLANTA	GA	1
IL0236	JOHN C KLUCZYNSKI FEDERAL BLDG	CHICAGO	IL	1
KY0086	ROMANO MAZZOLI FB	LOUISVILLE	KY	1
LA0034	FE HERBERT FEDERAL BLDG	NEW ORLEANS	LA	5
MI0800	985 MICHIGAN AVE FED BUILDING	DETROIT	MI	1
MO1965	TWO PERSHING SQUARE	KANSAS CITY	MO	1
MS0083	DR A H MCCOY FB - CAPITOL ST	JACKSON	MS	1
NJ4360	DIAMOND HEAD BLD	MOUNTAINSIDE	NJ	2
NY7340	NIAGARA CENTER - ELMWOOD AVE	BUFFALO	NY	1
PA0930	1835 MARKET ST	PHILADELPHIA	PA	2
PR3998	MILLENNIUM PLAZA BLDG	GUAYNABO	PR	1
TN0076	JOHN J DUNCAN FB	KNOXVILLE	TN	1

TX0164	HIPOLITO F GARCIA FOB/US CTHS	SAN ANTONIO	TX	7
TX0292	A MACEO SMITH FEDERAL BLDG	DALLAS	TX	8
TX0701	LABRANCH FEDERAL BUILDING	HOUSTON	TX	5
VA0088	400 N 8TH ST	RICHMOND	VA	1
VA0328	2300 CLARENDON BLVD	ARLINGTON	VA	1
Remote	Home Location			16
		Total		76

b. Number of staff who have taken the Deferred Resignation Program; and

Response:

OFCCP had 239 staff take the Deferred Resignation Program.

c. Number of staff who were placed on administrative leave and served a Reduction in Force notice.

Response:

OFCCP has 165 staff who were placed on administrative leave and received a Reduction in Force notice. Of the 165, 157 are still on administrative leave under the RIF notice. Two employees' retirements had been processed; five employees were accepted into the DRP; and one employee has passed away since the date the notices were issued. The Department has since issued a notice to the employees on administrative leave advising that the RIF is being held in abeyance and that the Department is actively working to identify a suitable position for reassignment elsewhere within the Department of Labor.

4) Section 159 of the *Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act* (WIOA) includes clear requirements and processes for the closure of Job Corps Centers that were not followed in the "pause" announced on May 29, 2025.

a. How does the Department define a "pause" and how is it different than a "termination"?

Response:

The Department is committed to complying with all statutory requirements under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), including those outlined in Section 161 (29 U.S.C. § 3209(j)) regarding the closure of Job Corps centers. In this instance, no decision to permanently close any Job Corps center was made or implemented. As such, the closure procedures outlined in WIOA—such as the public comment period and Congressional notification—were not triggered.

b. What authority is the Department using to "pause" operations? Please provide a citation for the law or regulation.

Response:

The Department is committed to complying with all statutory requirements under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), including those outlined in Section 161 (29 U.S.C. § 3209(j)) regarding the closure of Job Corps centers. In this instance, no decision to permanently close any Job Corps center was made or implemented. As such, the closure procedures outlined in WIOA—such as the public comment period and Congressional notification—were not triggered. Further, the Department resumed program operations that were paused on May 29, 2025, in compliance with court orders in *NJCA v. DOL* and *Cabrera v. DOL*.

The Department has, however, temporarily paused operations at select centers to meet fiscal and operational responsibilities or to address health and safety concerns. Most recently on December 19, 2024, the Department announced via [press release](#) the temporary pause of operations at the Whitney M. Young Jr. Job Corps Center in Simpsonville, Kentucky, and the Woodstock Job Corps Center in Woodstock, Maryland in order to address budget constraints and ensure the continued viability of the program.

- 5) With Job Corps operations on pause, how does the Department plan to fulfill its obligations to implement the *Full-Year Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act, 2025*, which includes \$1,760,155,000 for Job Corps? Does the Department of Labor intend to begin a new bidding process for contracts in order to operate the “paused” centers for FY 2025?

Response:

The Department has resumed center operations at the contractor-operated centers that were subject to the May 29, 2025 pause, in compliance with court orders in *NJCA v. DOL* and *Cabrera v. DOL*, including taking any contract actions necessary to maintain center operations.

- 6) Please provide a list of every Job Corps center operator contract that has been terminated or modified since January 20, 2025, including the total amount of funds originally awarded to each operator, the amount of funds that each operator has spent up to the date of the contract’s termination or modification, and the amount of remaining unspent funds for each contract.

Response:

There are no center operations contract terminations dating from on or after January 20, 2025 that are in effect today. On May 29, 2025, the Department did issue notices of terminations for the operations contracts that were set to expire after June 30, 2025. However, on June 4th, DOL effectively rescinded those termination notices, as required by the orders of the Court in *NJCA v. DOL* (1:25-cv-04641) (S.D.N.Y.). In compliance with the Court’s orders in *NJCA v. DOL*, beginning on July 1, 2025, the Department has modified a number of Job Corps operations contracts to extend performance through at least September 30, 2025, and to fund current work. The Department continues to take any necessary contract actions to operate centers in compliance with court orders in *NJCA v. DOL* and *Cabrera v. DOL*. The amount of unspent funds remaining on each contract is a dynamic number that contractors are tasked with monitoring under their contracts.

- 7) On April 25, 2025, the Department's Employment and Training Administration (ETA) released a "Job Corps Transparency Report", which is cited throughout the DOL press release announcing the pause of operations at centers. However, the report provides cost per enrollee based on enrollment from program year 2023. Please provide an updated cost per enrollee with the enrollments on campuses as of May 28, 2025, incorporating onboard strength at each campus.

Response:

The full cost and program data required for this calculation will not be available until after September 30, 2025.

- 8) Since the Trump Administration began on January 20, 2025, it's my understanding that DOL has not completed any background checks, which has led to a complete halt in new enrollments at Job Corps centers.
- a. Please provide the number of new enrollments on hold due to the cessation of background checks since January 20, 2025.

Response:

While background checks were paused in March 2025, between January 20 and June 5, 2025, Job Corps centers continued to process eligible applicant files beyond the background check step and collectively enrolled 11,375 new students. As of August 7, 2025, Job Corps had 18,235 applicants awaiting a background check. The Department has resumed background checks as of August 25, 2025.

- b. Please provide a list of onboard strength (enrollment) at each Job Corps center before January 20, 2025, as well as immediately before the operations pause on May 29, 2025.

Response:

Please see the table that follows.

Center-by-Center OBS on 1/15/2025 and 5/28/2025					
State	Region	Center	PY 2024 Planned OBS	OBS as of 01/15/2025	OBS as of 05/28/2025
Alaska	San Francisco	Alaska	226	196	156
New Mexico	Dallas	Albuquerque	327	229	203
Montana	Dallas	Anaconda	170	124	159
Oregon	San Francisco	Angell	160	125	138
Puerto Rico	Boston	Arecibo	201	186	154
Georgia	Atlanta	Atlanta	250	0	0
Indiana	Chicago	Atterbury	410	251	267
Tennessee	Atlanta	BL Hooks-Memphis	287	148	142
South Carolina	Atlanta	Bamberg	203	206	173
Wisconsin	Chicago	Blackwell	162	81	88
Virginia	Philadelphia	Blue Ridge	192	66	91
South Dakota	Dallas	Boxelder	124	91	84
New York	Boston	Brooklyn	145	114	118
Georgia	Atlanta	Brunswick	315	207	211
Kentucky	Philadelphia	Carl D. Perkins	235	96	121
Louisiana	Dallas	Carville	153	0	0
Arkansas	Dallas	Cass	119	99	85
New York	Boston	Cassadaga	245	159	157
Washington	San Francisco	Cascades	300	239	250
Idaho	San Francisco	Centennial	120	82	71
West Virginia	Philadelphia	Charleston	307	117	104
Ohio	Chicago	Cincinnati	202	196	195
Utah	Dallas	Clearfield	1002	801	744
Ohio	Chicago	Cleveland	346	184	163
Colorado	Dallas	Collbran	220	104	101
Washington	San Francisco	Columbia Basin	236	157	164
Washington	San Francisco	Curlew	172	120	117
Texas	Dallas	David Carrasco	379	358	299
Ohio	Chicago	Dayton	170	138	114
New York	Boston	Delaware Valley	208	164	161
Iowa	Chicago	Denison	282	220	204
Michigan	Chicago	Detroit	298	183	223
Kentucky	Philadelphia	Earle C. Clements	1022	555	563
New Jersey	Boston	Edison	417	392	317
Missouri	Chicago	Excelsior Springs	436	285	271
Rhode Island	Boston	Exeter	185	162	150
Mississippi	Atlanta	Finch-Henry	226	116	97
Virginia	Philadelphia	Flatwoods	105	75	67
Kansas	Chicago	Flint Hills	217	181	169

Michigan	Chicago	Flint-Genesee	307	181	147
Washington	San Francisco	Fort Simcoe	112	89	99
Arizona	San Francisco	Fred G. Acosta	267	254	255
Kentucky	Philadelphia	Frenchburg	100	71	81
Alabama	Atlanta	Gadsden	260	177	175
Texas	Dallas	Gary	1471	785	852
Michigan	Chicago	Gerald R. Ford	212	193	129
New York	Boston	Glenmont	266	243	252
Massachusetts	Boston	Grafton	237	234	201
Kentucky	Philadelphia	Great Onyx	151	123	103
Mississippi	Atlanta	Gulfport	107	109	116
Oklahoma	Dallas	Guthrie	532	376	321
West Virginia	Philadelphia	Harpers Ferry	109	124	118
Connecticut	Boston	Hartford	181	183	184
Hawaii	San Francisco	Hawaii	211	190	152
Minnesota	Chicago	Hubert Humphrey	264	165	164
Indiana	Chicago	Indy Pendency	100	54	39
California	San Francisco	Inland Empire	340	281	281
New York	Boston	Iroquois	225	163	106
Florida	Atlanta	Jacksonville	300	284	256
Tennessee	Atlanta	Jacobs Creek	111	90	88
Illinois	Chicago	Joliet	255	128	158
Pennsylvania	Philadelphia	Keystone	431	304	327
Montana	Dallas	Kicking Horse	0	0	0
North Carolina	Atlanta	Kittrell	350	241	234
Texas	Dallas	Laredo	220	222	194
Arkansas	Dallas	Little Rock	237	197	168
California	San Francisco	Long Beach	300	283	257
Maine	Boston	Loring	301	198	194
California	San Francisco	Los Angeles	614	524	513
North Carolina	Atlanta	Lyndon Johnson	120	116	101
Hawaii	San Francisco	Maui	128	66	57
Florida	Atlanta	Miami	300	292	248
Wisconsin	Chicago	Milwaukee	237	108	129
Missouri	Chicago	Mingo	144	119	100
Mississippi	Atlanta	Mississippi	292	204	167
Alabama	Atlanta	Montgomery	254	155	153
Kentucky	Philadelphia	Muhlenberg	343	170	187
New Hampshire	Boston	New Hampshire	300	239	238
Connecticut	Boston	New Haven	157	157	146
Louisiana	Dallas	New Orleans	186	156	105
Texas	Dallas	North Texas	562	435	390
Vermont	Boston	Northlands	220	147	143
North Carolina	Atlanta	Oconaluftee	114	119	109

Virginia	Philadelphia	Old Dominion	318	71	78
New York	Boston	Oneonta	291	238	241
Iowa	Chicago	Ottumwa	237	195	205
Oregon	San Francisco	PIVOT	60	22	22
Illinois	Chicago	Paul Simon	338	159	180
Maine	Boston	Penobscot	273	220	191
Pennsylvania	Philadelphia	Philadelphia	319	147	167
Arizona	San Francisco	Phoenix	353	295	259
Kentucky	Philadelphia	Pine Knot	160	155	145
Nebraska	Chicago	Pine Ridge	171	78	110
Florida	Atlanta	Pinellas	300	271	260
Pennsylvania	Philadelphia	Pittsburgh	699	443	438
District of Columbia	Philadelphia	Potomac	378	264	267
North Dakota	Dallas	Quentin Burdick	197	120	105
Puerto Rico	Boston	Ramey	470	356	320
Pennsylvania	Philadelphia	Red Rock	264	196	159
New Mexico	Dallas	Roswell	178	121	113
California	San Francisco	Sacramento	414	380	326
California	San Francisco	San Diego	555	394	399
California	San Francisco	San Jose	396	240	242
North Carolina	Atlanta	Schenck	192	47	98
Louisiana	Dallas	Shreveport	285	253	214
Massachusetts	Boston	Shriver	300	256	244
Nevada	San Francisco	Sierra Nevada	509	297	291
New York	Boston	South Bronx	250	222	227
Oregon	San Francisco	Springdale	139	76	75
Missouri	Chicago	St. Louis	520	251	218
Oklahoma	Dallas	Talking Leaves	197	159	141
Oregon	San Francisco	Timber Lake	165	124	133
Oregon	San Francisco	Tongue Point	473	353	314
Montana	Dallas	Trapper Creek	215	150	158
California	San Francisco	Treasure Island	532	385	390
Oklahoma	Dallas	Tulsa	235	165	155
Georgia	Atlanta	Turner	732	531	510
Utah	Dallas	Weber Basin	210	168	201
Massachusetts	Boston	Westover	437	376	353
Kentucky	Philadelphia	Whitney M. Young	0	157	0
Delaware	Philadelphia	Wilmington	153	113	69
Wyoming	Dallas	Wind River	300	179	191
Oregon	San Francisco	Wolf Creek	221	161	151
Maryland	Philadelphia	Woodland	300	243	285
Maryland	Philadelphia	Woodstock	0	248	1
		Total	35438	25435	23974

- c. Will you commit to conducting background checks to begin new enrollments in the program?

Response:

The Department has resumed background checks as of August 25, 2025.

- 9) The WANTO grants were funded at FY 2024 levels through the *Full-Year Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act, 2025*. How does the Department plan to fulfill its obligations to award those funds? Does the Department intend to release a new FOA for the FY 2025 WANTO grants?

Response:

On July 9, 2025, the Department published the Women in Apprenticeship and Nontraditional Occupations (WANTO) Funding Opportunity Announcement for FY 2025 for purposes of awarding a new set of grants to community-based organizations seeking to recruit, train, and retain more women in pre-apprenticeship and Registered Apprenticeship programs. This announcement follows a thorough evaluation and realignment of the program, which will ensure WANTO grants help the department achieve President Trump's goal of reaching one million new active apprentices.

- 10) It's been widely reported (including by WIRED²) that DOGE staffers, including Miles Collins, Aram Moghaddassi, and Marko Elez have gotten access to systems within the Department that contain U.S. citizens' Social Security numbers. Protecting Americans' privacy is an incredibly important responsibility, which should not be taken lightly.
- a. In any instance where the Department has shared data with DOGE, where has the data been stored?

Response:

Department of Labor staff is hyper-aware of potential privacy concerns when accessing sensitive data and operates with care. These individuals are, or were, Department of Labor employees, which means they are, or were, subject to the same oversight, rules, and accountability as any other federal employee within the Department. Like all DOL employees, they are, or were, required to undergo cybersecurity and data privacy trainings and to adhere to those practices.

- b. What processes are in place to ensure U.S. citizens' and legal residents' data from DOL is not being copied by Elon Musk and his affiliates?

Response:

See the response to 10 a. above.

- c. Has DOL staff and/or DOGE shared National Farmworker Jobs Program data with other agencies during the Trump Administration?

² <https://www.wired.com/story/doge-access-immigration-data-department-of-labor/>

Response:

The Department's Employment and Training Administration (ETA) has not shared individualized records for the National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) with any other federal agency.

- i. If so, who approved sharing the National Farmworker Jobs Program data?

Response:

ETA has not shared individualized records for the NFJP with any other federal agency.

- ii. If so, for what purposes has data from the National Farmworker Jobs Program been shared with other agencies?

Response:

ETA has not shared individualized records for the NFJP with any other federal agency.

11) A recent report from the Department of Labor's Inspector General shows the vast majority of employers and anti-union consultants failing to report persuader activities under the *Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act* (LMRDA). Widespread non-compliance with the LMRDA's reporting requirements for employers and persuaders denies workers critical pre-representation election information—such as who is being paid and how much they are being paid to persuade workers on the question of union representation—and undermines their right to free and fair elections. What concrete steps is the Department taking to increase compliance by employers and their consultants with regard to persuader activities?

Response:

The Department is committed to the evenhanded administration and enforcement of the LMRDA, including all requirements related to persuader activity reporting. The Office of Labor-Management Standards (OLMS) remains focused on upholding the law and ensuring that employers and workers have access to information required by the LMRDA. OLMS will continue to administer all statutory requirements as directed by Congress and in accordance with its mission to promote transparency and protect the American worker.

- a. Will the Department implement all six of the Inspector General's recommendations in its May 2024 report entitled, *OLMS Can Do More to Protect Workers' Rights to Unionize Through Persuader Activity Disclosure* (May 2024 Report)?

Response:

In response to the Department's Office of Inspector General May 2024 report concerning the Office of Labor-Management Standards (OLMS) persuader reporting program, OLMS has already implemented a number of the report's recommendations. Specifically, as of January 2025, OLMS

added the Employer Identification Number (EIN) on the Forms LM-10, LM-20, and LM-21, and last year completed the recommendation for written tip line procedures and the recommendation for interagency training with staff of the National Labor Relations Board. OLMS seeks to complete the remaining recommendations, as soon as feasible. Additionally, OLMS continues to process its persuader reporting tip line and engage in cross-match efforts involving the three persuader reports to obtain more reports. As a result of these efforts, OLMS has seen a continued increase in persuader reports in recent years and anticipates that trend to continue this year.

- i. If the Department declines to implement one or more of the recommendations, please provide a specific explanation for each, stating why the Department will not implement it and whether the Department has an alternative proposal and an explanation of the alternative proposal.

Response:

See above.

- b. Will the Department implement all six of the Inspector General's recommendations in its May 2024 Report by the end of Calendar Year 2025?

Response:

The Department is committed to addressing the Inspector General's recommendations from the May 2024 Report. We are taking these recommendations seriously and will continue to make progress toward their completion.

OLMS has already implemented a number of the report's recommendations. Specifically, as of January 2025, OLMS added the Employer Identification Number (EIN) on the Forms LM-10, LM-20, and LM-21, and last year completed the recommendation for written tip line procedures and the recommendation for interagency training with staff of the National Labor Relations Board. OLMS seeks to complete the remaining recommendations, as soon as feasible. Additionally, OLMS continues to process its persuader reporting tip line and engage in cross-match efforts involving the three persuader reports to obtain more reports. As a result of these efforts, OLMS has seen a continued increase in persuader reports in recent years and anticipates that trend to continue this year.

- i. If the Department will not implement one or more of the recommendations by the end of Calendar Year 2025, please provide a specific explanation of why the Department cannot do so, including resource constraints or the time required for implementation.

Response:

See above.

- 12) For more than five decades, the ERISA Advisory Council has served as a valuable resource for the Department of Labor. As you know, Ranking Member DeSaulnier and I wrote to you recently asking for information regarding the status of the Council, which

has yet to hold a meeting this year. The Council is established by section 512 of ERISA and is required to meet at least four times per year. The Department is required to support the Council's operations, including by providing an Executive Secretary to the Council. As we await your full response to this letter, I request answers to the following questions:

- a. Will you confirm that you are not considering abolishing the Council or purging its membership?

Response:

Thank you for your June 2, 2025, letter regarding the Department of Labor's Advisory Council on Employee Welfare and Pension Benefit Plans (Council). Your letter raises concerns about transparency related to the Council's activities, specifically the removal of records from our website and the potential elimination of the Council by the current Administration. As you know, the Department published the Council's reports, along with the written statements by invited witnesses and issue statements, online at <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/ebsa/about-ebsa/about-us/erisa-advisory-council>. These postings do not reflect any endorsement of the views expressed by the Council and witnesses and are consistent with our historical practices.

- b. Will you commit to convening the minimum of four statutorily required meetings of the Council this year? When will the first meeting be held?

Response:

See the response to 12. a above.

- c. According to the Department's website, the position of Executive Secretary is vacant. When do you intend to fill this position, as required by law?

Response:

See above.

13) The Employee Benefits Security Administration (EBSA) has the vast mission of protecting the health, retirement, and other employee benefits of more than 156 million American workers, retirees, and their families covered by millions of plans holding \$14 trillion in assets. However, EBSA has for decades been severely underfunded, with about one investigator for every 17,500 plans within its jurisdiction. According to recent reports, more than 20 percent of EBSA's workforce has been lost during the first few months of the Trump Administration, yet the Budget proposes to further cut EBSA and neglects to extend the bipartisan *No Surprises Act* implementation funding. This would leave EBSA with just 640 FTEs, a decline of more than 35 percent since 2012 when the agency's mission was much smaller.

- a. How can you vigorously enforce the law—including shared bipartisan priorities such as health care price transparency, surprise medical billing, and improving retirement security—while slashing EBSA's workforce?

Response:

EBSA is currently working on a strategic plan to refocus its activities to facilitate the distribution of resources from lower priority strategies/programs to higher priorities strategies/programs. The restructuring will create a more responsive organization that facilitates results-based management and outcomes, all of which are aimed at protecting the security of employee benefits.

14) In 2020, President Trump signed into law the *Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021*, which included important reforms that have improved enforcement of the *Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act* (MHPAEA) by EBSA. Despite the high recoveries EBSA has achieved on behalf of plan participants thanks to this law, the Department has announced nonenforcement of the 2024 MHPAEA final rule while also shrinking the agency's workforce.

- a. Does the Administration intend to further roll back this bipartisan progress on parity by issuing regulations or guidance that would weaken MHPAEA?

Response:

On September 9, 2024, the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services (HHS), and the Treasury (the Departments) issued a formal rule titled "Requirements Related to the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act," (2024 Final Rule). On January 17, 2025, the ERISA Industry Committee (ERIC) filed suit in the U.S. District Court of the District of Columbia challenging certain provisions of the 2024 Final Rule on multiple grounds, including on grounds that they are arbitrary and capricious and contrary to law. Additionally, Executive Order 14219, titled "Ensuring Lawful Governance and Implementing the President's 'Department of Government Efficiency' Deregulatory Initiative," directs federal agencies to review regulations to identify those that may undermine the national interest, including by imposing undue burdens on small businesses or significant costs upon private parties that are not outweighed by public benefits. In such cases, federal agencies must exercise enforcement discretion to ensure lawful governance. This lawsuit is in abeyance while the Departments reconsider the 2024 Final Rule, including whether to issue a notice of proposed rulemaking rescinding or modifying the regulation through notice and comment rulemaking.

MHPAEA provides critical protections for workers, individuals, and their families who need treatment for mental health conditions and substance use disorders. During this period of nonenforcement of the 2024 Final Rule as the Departments revisit the Rule, the Departments remain committed to ensuring that individuals receive protections under the law in a way that is not unduly burdensome for plans and issuers.

- b. Have you analyzed the projected impact of nonenforcement of the law on benefit recoveries for people with behavioral health needs? If so, please provide this information to the Committee.

Response:

See above.

15) Rep. Ilhan Omar asked you during the hearing, “[C]an you assure this Committee that you will not propose any rollbacks of child labor rules that prevent children from being employed in hazardous occupations?” You did not answer that question; instead, your response reiterated your commitment “to fighting against all child exploitation” and then addressed a separate matter regarding funds for the Bureau of International Labor Affairs. Please address the specific question whether you will commit not to roll back hazardous occupation orders.

Response:

The Wage and Hour Division investigates all actionable claims of illegal child labor brought to its attention and will continue to protect children from exploitation and harm from illegal child labor, including those children who are forced or asked to perform hazardous jobs.

Representative Haley Stevens (D-MI)

1. There has been a lot of talk from you and this Administration about supporting American workers, including union workers. It’s been less than five months but I think we can safely say that a lot of that talk has proved empty. So far, the Trump Administration has stripped one million federal workers of their right to form a union and has undermined the independence of the National Labor Relations Board by firing one of its board members. I don’t see why Michiganders should trust an Administration to protect private sector workers when they treat their own workforce with such disrespect.

I am from Michigan where union membership really means something. We recognize that unions are a path to safe, high-paying, middle-class jobs for working people. I hope that the Administration you’re a part of quits talking a big game and actually starts acting on behalf of American workers.

So Secretary Chavez-DeRemer, my first question focuses on the Office of Labor-Management Standards, or OLMS. This office is charged with collecting financial disclosures from employers when they hire anti-union “persuaders” or consultants. Transparency on how much companies are spending on these activities is vital. President Trump has tapped, Elisabeth Messenger, who has a history of supporting anti-union causes to lead OLMS.

- a. In light of this, will you commit that OLMS under your leadership will ensure employer compliance with financial disclosure requirements when it comes to anti-union consultants?

Response:

The Department administers and enforces all statutory requirements under the Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act of 1959 (LMRDA), including those related to employer financial disclosure reports involving consultants. The agency delegated authority to carry out these responsibilities, OLMS, approaches these responsibilities impartially and in accordance with the law. The Department continues to offer compliance assistance and outreach to help ensure employers and consultants are aware of and understand their obligations under the LMRDA. Promoting

transparency and protecting union members' rights remain central to the Department's work.

- b. In fact the Department's Inspector General found in a May 2024 report that employers significantly underreported and delayed their financial disclosures on "persuader" activity. Will you commit to improving OLMS enforcement on employers' financial disclosures in line with the Inspector General's recommendation?

Response:

OLMS administers the financial disclosure requirements of the LMRDA in accordance with the law and strives to achieve transparency in labor-management relations. The agency reviews relevant recommendations, including those from the Department of Labor's Office of Inspector General, and continues to provide compliance assistance and outreach so that employers understand their disclosure obligations. The Department plans to complete all recommendations from the Department's Inspector General, where feasible.

- 2. I'd like to move on to another issue that often faces workers who decide to join a union: difficulty reaching a first contract with employers. Oftentimes, workers who decide to organize can face significant delays in reaching a first contract with their employer. This only hurts workers and saps employers of valuable resources.
 - a. As a former cosponsor of the Protecting the Right to Organize Act during your time in the House, do you recognize the right of a legally formed union to reach a timely first contract with their employer?

Response:

Overseeing the collective bargaining process is primarily the jurisdiction of agencies independent from the Department of Labor (DOL), like the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB). However, DOL's Office of Labor-Management Standards (OLMS) is diligently working to ensure transparency and democratic processes within unions, helping ensure unions remain responsive to the interests of their members. The Department is committed to promoting a safe workplace and supporting worker rights, including enforcing the laws within the Department's jurisdiction.

- b. Do you think the Department of Labor has a role to play in making sure workers who have organized are can reach a first contract with their employers?

Response:

See above.

- c. I am concerned that current and future budget cuts under this Administration will undermine worker protections, including their right to organize. Will you commit to working with Congress to ensure budget cuts do not negatively impact these rights?

Response:

The Department is committed to promoting a safe workplace and supporting worker rights, including enforcing the laws within the Department's jurisdiction.

Rep. Ilhan Omar (D-MN)**Impacts on the Bureau of International Labor Affairs (ILAB)**

1. Please provide a list of all ILAB programs terminated by the Department in March 2025, including:
 - a) Project Title
 - b) Country of implementation
 - c) Original duration and funding level
 - d) Congressional authorization

Response:

Please see the attached spreadsheet containing the requested information.

2. What specific criteria or policy rationale was used to evaluate and terminate these grants?

Response:

Please see the attached spreadsheet containing the requested information.

- a) Are you aware that multiple stakeholders, from [Members of Congress](#) to [labor/advocates](#) to [industry groups](#) have spoken in defense of ILAB?

Response:

We are aware that multiple stakeholders support the work of ILAB, and while some stakeholders have differing views about what its posture should be on particular global issues and questions of grant policy, we all agree that ILAB plays a critical role as the voice of the American worker in international trade. ILAB will continue to conduct its important mission, in alignment with President Trump's America First, pro-worker agenda.

- b) Were any of these stakeholders consulted or notified before the decision, and if not, please explain how you will prevent a race to the bottom for labor and business practices without these international and on-the-ground partnerships?

Response:

The Department of Labor remains committed to combating child labor, forced labor and other exploitative labor practices around the world. This is essential to protecting U.S. workers and companies from being undercut by unfair competition. ILAB leads our efforts in this area by

producing three congressionally-mandated reports identifying child and forced labor in over 150 countries, by engaging directly with U.S. trading partners to prevent and remediate labor abuses, and by working with other U.S. government agencies for a government-wide approach to ensure labor rights are considered at the most relevant and impactful points in U.S. policymaking and actions. ILAB also focuses on supply chains with a direct nexus to the United States and priority U.S. trading partners. Through these methods, ILAB continues to sharpen its focus and enhance its effectiveness in advancing the Administration's America First Trade Policy.

- c) Without these ILAB grants, how will you ensure that U.S. workers and businesses do not face unfair competition from being undercut by exploitative corporations and regimes?

Response:

The Department of Labor is committed to addressing unfair labor practices around the world that put American workers and businesses at a competitive disadvantage. ILAB leads efforts in this area through its production of three congressionally mandated reports identifying child and forced labor in over 150 countries around the world, engaging directly with U.S. trading partners to prevent and remediate labor abuses, and working with other U.S. government agencies for a government-wide approach to ensure labor rights are considered at the most relevant and impactful points in U.S. policymaking and actions. ILAB also focuses on supply chains with a direct nexus to the United States and priority U.S. trading partners. Through these methods, ILAB continues to sharpen its focus and enhance its effectiveness in advancing the Administration's America First Trade Policy.

In alignment with America First Trade Policy, and in close coordination with the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative, ILAB is ensuring that American workers and businesses benefit from the Administration's trade agenda by combating unfair labor practices overseas that undermine the ability of American workers and business to compete in international markets. Importantly, ILAB utilizes its technical expertise to support vigorous enforcement of labor provisions in trade agreements. For instance, ILAB continues to prioritize the enforcement of labor provisions in the USMCA, including by administering the Rapid Response Labor Mechanism, which allows the United States to take enforcement actions against factories in Mexico that deny workers the rights of free association and collective bargaining under Mexican law, undermining U.S. workers' and business' ability to compete fairly in trade.

ILAB will also continue to utilize its critical role in the Forced Labor Enforcement Task Force (FLETF), and the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act (UFLPA), to ensure that foreign manufacturers producing products with forced labor are banned from importing those goods into the United States. Similarly, ILAB will continue to develop and share its research on supply chains tainted with forced labor, so that U.S. companies can undertake robust due diligence to avoid sourcing goods from unscrupulous foreign suppliers utilizing unfair labor practices.

3. Please detail any legal review that was conducted prior to termination. Was grant termination evaluated for consistency with appropriations language or statutory mandates under:
- a) US-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) implementing legislation, P.L.

116- 113?

Response:

The Department cannot provide a response at this time due to ongoing litigation.

- i. This bill provided \$210 million for ILAB; \$180 million over four years for USMCA-related technical assistance projects and \$30 million over eight years for the capacity of ILAB to monitor USMCA compliance, including the necessary expenses of additional full-time ILAB employees for the Interagency Committee and labor attachés in Mexico. Can you confirm whether those appropriated funds are currently being disbursed on schedule, and if not, why not?

Response:

The period of availability for the \$180 million provided to ILAB to administer technical assistance grants related to the USMCA ended on December 31, 2023. ILAB fully obligated all its USMCA technical assistance funding by that deadline. For any future allocation of FY 2025 technical assistance funding, ILAB will evaluate how such assistance can address labor law enforcement in countries and sectors where American workers face unfair competition, particularly where it is caused by unfair labor practices or lax enforcement.

- b) Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2005 and the Frederick Douglass Trafficking Victims Prevention and Protection Reauthorization Act of 2018?

Response:

The Department cannot provide a response at this time due to ongoing litigation.

- c) Section 307 of the Tariff Act of 1930 and the Trade Facilitation and Trade Enforcement Act of 2015?

Response:

The Department cannot provide a response at this time due to ongoing litigation.

- d) Executive Order 13126, "Prohibition of Acquisition of Products Produced by Forced or Indentured Child Labor"?

Response:

The Department cannot provide a response at this time due to ongoing litigation.

4. Did the Department of Labor consult with the following agencies before the decision to terminate ILAB grants, if so, please provide written or summarized meeting notes or correspondence from the following:
 - a) Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR)

Response:

The Department cannot provide a response at this time due to ongoing litigation.

- b) Customs and Border Protection (CBP)

Response:

The Department cannot provide a response at this time due to ongoing litigation.

- c) Department of State (including the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons or other relevant offices & attachés).

Response:

The Department cannot provide a response at this time due to ongoing litigation.

5. How will the Department fulfill its labor enforcement obligations under trade agreements such as USMCA and CAFTA-DR in the absence of ILAB's grantmaking, technical assistance/research, and on-the-ground partnerships? How will these same obligations be met with a reduced workforce?

Response:

ILAB monitors and enforces Mexico's compliance with USMCA labor commitments through our staff located in Washington, D.C. and through labor attachés based in Mexico City, Monterrey, and Tijuana, Mexico. These staff also work to ensure companies in Mexico are abiding by USMCA labor provisions, including by working with the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative to administer the USMCA Rapid Response Labor Mechanism, which allows the United States to take enforcement actions against facilities in Mexico that fail to comply with Mexico's obligations to guarantee free association and the right to collectively bargain. Dedicated funding for ILAB's USMCA staff, which was appropriated in the USMCA Implementation Act, is available through September 30, 2027. Our Mexico-based staff have strong on-the-ground partnerships with representatives from the Mexican government, business, and labor communities. Similarly, ILAB monitors and enforces CAFTA-DR labor commitments through our Washington, DC-based staff and a regional labor attaché based in Guatemala.

6. What alternative plans does DOL have in place to support U.S. businesses and suppliers seeking compliance with laws like the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act?

Response:

Consistent with the Administration's commitment to strengthening labor standards in global supply chains and supporting fair trade practices that put American workers and businesses first, the Department of Labor plays a leading role in implementing the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act (UFLPA) and advancing a whole-of-government response to combat forced labor.

Through the Forced Labor Enforcement Task Force, ILAB has been instrumental in developing and updating the UFLPA Strategy. This includes:

- Assessing the risk of importing goods mined, produced, or manufactured with forced labor in China
- Evaluating forced labor schemes and maintaining the UFLPA Entity List
- Issuing importer guidance that strengthens due diligence expectations
- Collaborating with NGOs and industry on best practices

Through robust private sector engagement, ILAB also raises awareness about child and forced labor throughout supply chains, and urges industry to exercise due diligence in combating these practices. Tools like *Comply Chain* and ILAB's research provide American companies with useful resources to identify, assess, and mitigate labor risks in the production of goods intended for the U.S. market, supporting compliance with the UFLPA and reinforcing a level playing field. These efforts help counter exploitative practices by foreign adversaries, safeguard strategic industries, and uphold the goal of an America first trade policy.

7. Please confirm the number of ILAB staff who have resigned, retired, been reassigned, or been fired since January 2025.

Response:

On January 19, 2025, the Department's Bureau of International Affairs (ILAB) had 149 employees. On May 15, 2025, ILAB had 146 employees, which includes 58 employees who accepted the Deferred Resignation Program.

8. How many full-time staff currently remain at ILAB, responsible for:
 - a) Trade agreement labor enforcement with USTR

Response:

ILAB's Office of Trade and Labor Affairs currently has 23 full time staff who are wholly responsible for trade agreement labor enforcement with USTR and another ten support trade enforcement efforts through technical assistance, research, program and policy monitoring and evaluation, and data analysis.

In addition, ILAB's Office of Child Labor, Forced Labor, and Human Trafficking has four staff members who support trade enforcement efforts through their work on the Forced Labor Enforcement Task Force and implementation of the UFLPA and USMCA.

b) Country-specific monitoring and reporting

Response:

ILAB's Office of Child Labor, Forced Labor, and Human Trafficking currently has 14 full-time staff responsible for conducting country-specific monitoring and reporting under Congressional mandates and Presidential directives to combat child labor and forced labor globally.

In addition, ILAB's Office of Trade and Labor Affairs has 23 staff responsible for monitoring compliance with country-specific labor obligations under U.S. trade agreements and preference programs.

c) Forced labor risk mapping and coordination with CBP

Response:

ILAB's Office of Child Labor, Forced Labor, and Human Trafficking has five full-time staff to support forced labor risk mapping and coordination with U.S. Customs and Border Protection's Forced Labor Division.

9. What is the current operational budget for ILAB for FY25? Has any unobligated funding been repurposed or rescinded? If so, please identify the amounts and new funding designations.

Response:

The Department's FY 2025 Operating Plan submitted to Congress on April 29, 2025, outlined a funding level of \$113.125 million for ILAB. Most of this funding is available for obligation through December 31, 2025, and the Department is in the process of determining the exact programmatic needs in line with Administration priorities. We will continue to review allocations throughout the fiscal year.

10. Does the Department intend to revisit the decision to cancel these programs and contracts soon or in future budget cycles?

Response:

In alignment with the President's America First Trade Policy, the Department plans to obligate ILAB's FY 2025 technical assistance funds for projects that address unfair labor practices that undermine fair competition. By doing so, ILAB will be able to better serve national interests and ensure American workers and businesses get opportunities to compete in global markets. ILAB's renewed technical assistance program will strengthen labor law enforcement in priority trade partner countries, refocusing on strategic sectors where systemic labor abuses and lax enforcement artificially suppress wages and labor costs, placing American workers at a competitive disadvantage.

Impacts on Child Labor Enforcement

1. How many Wage and Hour Division (WHD) field offices have been closed, downsized, or had staffing reductions since January 2025?

Response:

Of over ninety (90) offices, WHD has closed two (2) offices, each housing a single investigator, in Harlingen, TX and Fayetteville, AR, since January, 2025. WHD has not mandated staffing reductions since January 2025, although some WHD personnel have voluntarily left WHD since then.

2. What is the current number of active child labor investigations being pursued by the Department as of June 2025?

Response:

As of the date of this response, WHD has over 950 open child labor investigations.

3. What percentage of current WHD investigations involve migrant or undocumented children? Please provide available disaggregated data by industry and state.

Response:

WHD does not track the requested information.

4. How many investigators and staff currently specialize in child labor enforcement? Has the number increased or decreased since FY2023 and FY2024?

Response:

All WHD investigators are trained to professionally handle investigations into all laws under WHD's jurisdiction, including child labor laws.

5. What is the current average caseload per WHD investigator working on child labor violations? How does this compare to previous fiscal years?

Response:

WHD investigators are responsible for conducting investigations under all applicable Acts—including checking for child labor in every FLSA investigation—and are not limited to conducting enforcement under specific statutes or provisions. Investigator workloads vary based on several factors, including the scope, severity, and nature of violations involved in a case. Investigations of egregious child labor violations can involve more than one investigator, such as coordinated team investigations. Complex investigations can also overlap fiscal years. For these reasons, investigator caseloads are dynamic and are not tracked through national averages tied to investigators handling a

single issue.

6. What is the status of the DOL-HHS interagency taskforce on child labor?

Response:

In 2023, DOL and the HHS Administration for Children and Families formalized a collaborative partnership, referred to in some instances as a “taskforce”, to enhance and maximize the wellbeing of children and enforcement of federal child labor laws via a Memorandum of Agreement regarding Inter-agency Data Sharing (the “MOA”). The MOA, including its provisions pertaining to the exchange of information, remains in effect.

- a) If it’s still active, which offices are involved, and what are its current goals and deliverables?

Response:

The MOA between DOL and HHS involves WHD and HHS’s Administration for Children and Families. The agreement provides that it will help identify geographies and employers where children are likely being exploited, aid investigations by providing information to help identify circumstances where children are unlawfully employed, and facilitate coordination to ensure that victims or potential victims of child labor trafficking have access to critical services.

- b) If not, what was the reason to dissolve the taskforce, and what are you doing instead to improve interagency coordination and efficacy?

Response:

The task force has not been dissolved.

7. Has the Department formally supported any enhancements or modifications to civil or criminal penalty structures under the Fair Labor Standards Act to address child labor violations. Why or why not? What specific statutory changes would the Department recommend to improve deterrence and accountability of unscrupulous employers?

Response:

The Department does not offer support or opposition for legislation. The Department provides technical assistance as requested, and continues to stand ready to provide additional assistance if requested to do so.

8. What kind of outreach, technical assistance, or enforcement support has DOL provided to local agencies, particularly in states that have experienced substantial increases in child labor violations and/or have rolled back child labor laws?

Response:

WHD regularly provides technical assistance to state and local agencies. WHD does not, however, enforce state and local wage and hour laws. If a state or locality has laws that provide weaker protections than federal law provides, WHD continues to enforce its laws to provide the greatest amount of protection to workers under the law.

9. Will the next Solicitor of Labor be directed to prioritize litigation and enforcement of egregious child labor and labor trafficking violations? What directives will be issued to ensure consistent and strong enforcement under the Solicitor's purview?

Response:

Enforcement of child labor and labor trafficking laws are a high priority for the Trump Administration, the Secretary of Labor and all Department of Labor employees. The Solicitor will prioritize litigation and other mechanisms to ensure that such violations are stopped, punished and ultimately prevented.

Rep. Donald Norcross (D-NJ)

1. As the daughter of a Teamster, you know that the right of workers to form a union and collectively bargain is central to improving wages, hours, working conditions, and more. You also know that when workers vote to form a union, they don't immediately reap the benefits of collective bargaining. Instead, they first need to obtain first contract with management who, because the law currently doesn't impose a negotiation deadline, often stall, delay, and drag out negotiations. In fact, according to Bloomberg Law, it takes an average of 458 days for unions and employers to agree on a first contract. This hurts workers who, despite exercising their right to bargain collectively, are prevented from doing so by employers who enjoy the benefits of the status quo. Do you support the idea of a guaranteed first contract?

Response:

Overseeing the collective bargaining process is primarily the jurisdiction of agencies independent from the Department of Labor (DOL), like the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB). However, DOL's Office of Labor-Management Standards (OLMS) is diligently working to ensure transparency and democratic processes within unions, helping ensure unions remain responsive to the interests of their members. The Department is committed to promoting a safe workplace and supporting worker rights, including enforcing the laws within the Department's jurisdiction.

2. On March 14, 2025, President Trump ordered the dismantling of the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service (FMCS), including firing mediators and staff, and closing field offices across the country. FMCS is a small but vital federal agency responsible for helping to resolve contract negotiations between workers and employers. Do you support reversing the staffing cuts to FMCS, which would enable the agency to continue to provide necessary services including mediation for collective bargaining, grievances, and employment disputes?

Response:

The Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service (FMCS) is a federal agency independent from the Department of Labor (DOL). DOL does not have jurisdiction over this agency. Following the passage of the Labor Management Relations Act of 1947, FMCS took over from DOL the responsibility for engaging in mediation during labor disputes. While FMCS is not in DOL's jurisdiction, I respect the authority the President has to oversee the executive branch.

Rep. Alma S Adams, PhD (D-NC)

1. Madam Secretary, I have heard you say over and over again that you support workforce development while your administration is cutting critical agencies like the DOL Women's Bureau. In May, you cut a Women in Apprenticeship and Nontraditional Occupations (WANTO) grant just up the road from my district. Hope Renovations in Chapel Hill trained women and nonbinary people for construction jobs, which we need more of in North Carolina. After receiving the grant in 2023, Hope Renovations had the rug pulled from under them by your agency. 35 apprentices and 80 interns will not be able to participate in this program because your agency is more focused on fighting "DEI" than it is on strengthening the American workforce and helping North Carolinians get good-paying jobs.
 - a. Please explain to me, Madam Secretary, how eliminating the Women's Bureau and WANTO grants is going to help the American worker.

Response:

The Department of Labor continues to ensure the Women's Bureau fulfills the mandate of its authorizing statute. Consistent with the President's Executive Order 14222, the Department has been reviewing all taxpayer-funded grants to ensure they fulfill their intended purpose.

On July 9th, the Department announced \$5 million in available funding opportunities for 14 WANTO grants to attract and retain more American workers in Registered Apprenticeship programs, including in high-growth industries like construction, manufacturing, and cybersecurity.

However, the current structure of DOL's workforce development programs, including WANTO, makes it administratively burdensome for States to respond to their workforce needs. In addition to eliminating the Women's Bureau, the Budget proposes to create a new Make America Skilled Again (MASA) grant program to reduce the administrative burden on States by creating one workforce development program that will allow States and localities to determine how best to serve workers and employers in their areas, ensuring high performance by holding grantees accountable for the employment outcomes of the people they serve. The MASA grant maintains support for evidence-based programs by requiring that a minimum of 10 percent of MASA grantee expenditures are on Registered Apprenticeship activities, ensuring dedicated funding for this highly effective training model.

2. Federal contractors receive hundreds of billions of taxpayer dollars and employ 20 percent of the nation's workers. This Administration has dismantled the civil rights framework that protected these workers by rescinding President Lyndon Johnson's historic Executive Order 11246 (EO 11246). The proposed budget eliminates the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP) and moves responsibility for enforcing the Vietnam Era Veterans Readjustment Assistance Act and Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act, which protect veterans and people with disabilities from discrimination, out of OFCCP to other agencies. I understand that worker complaints related to disability and veteran status discrimination are not actively being worked on and have been paused since OFCCP was ordered to pause enforcement on January 24, 2025—that is over 4 months.
 - a. Are claims being processed? Are investigations going forward?

Response:

Yes, OFCCP is currently carrying out the statutorily required functions delegated to it under Section 503 and VEVRAA. On July 1, 2025, pursuant to Secretary's Order 08-2025, the abeyance on Section 503 and VEVRAA activities was lifted. Any VEVRAA and Section 503 complaints held in abeyance, as well as new complaints under those statutes, will be processed.

- b. When does OFCCP expect to begin working on these cases?

Response:

OFCCP is currently working on Section 503 and VEVRAA matters following the issuance of Secretary's Order 08-2025 on July 1, 2025.

- c. The FY 2026 budget proposes to eliminate OFCCP and transfer those responsibilities elsewhere, do you plan to indefinitely suspend processing claims related to disability and veteran status until they have been transferred out of OFCCP?

Response:

No. On July 1, 2025, pursuant to Secretary's Order 08-2025, the abeyance on Section 503 and VEVRAA activities was lifted. Any VEVRAA and Section 503 complaints held in abeyance, as well as new complaints under those statutes, will be processed by OFCCP.

- d. How is this fair for workers? By stopping enforcement, you are **encouraging** contractors to violate their workers' rights!

Response:

The Department of Labor is committed to carrying out the statutory functions which Congress has currently assigned to this Department to investigate and enforce Section 503 and VEVRAA. OFCCP has always faithfully executed on the statutorily required functions under those laws. On

January 21, 2025, President Donald Trump issued Executive Order (E.O.) 14173, "Ending Illegal Discrimination and Restoring Merit-Based Opportunity," which revoked E.O. 11246, which was previously enforced by OFCCP. OFCCP's previous structure entwined the three program areas of E.O. 11246, Section 503, and VEVRAA. A brief abeyance in Section 503 and VEVRAA activity was necessary to unwind OFCCP's E.O. 11246 program areas from the Section 503 and VEVRAA program areas and ensure OFCCP did not undertake any activity for which it was not authorized by law.

3. Because OSHA does not have a heat stress standard, the only way the Department can protect workers from extreme heat is to use the General Duty Clause of the OSH Act. But General Duty Clause cases take more time and resources to prove, and your budget appears to be taking resources *away* from OSHA and the Solicitor of Labor.
 - a. Your budget request would reduce the FTEs in OSHA's federal enforcement program by 168 people, is that correct?

Response:

OSHA's FY 2026 President's Budget Request reduces FTEs in the Federal Enforcement budget activity by 168 FTE below the FY 2025 Enacted level.

- b. Is it correct that dozens of employees in the Solicitor's Office took the "Fork in the Road" offer to leave the Department?

Response:

Every year employees retire or resign from the Department of Labor to pursue various life and career goals. In recent months, approximately 120 employees in the Solicitor's Office voluntarily opted to accept the Administration's offer to take part in the Deferred Resignation Program.

The Office of Solicitor continues to execute its enforcement duties vigorously. It is expected to be able to fully perform at the same level throughout the Trump Administration. The Solicitor's Office closely monitors its human resource capabilities.

- c. And your budget projects that the Solicitor's Office will lose 40 additional FTEs, is that correct?

Response:

The FY 2026 President's Request for SOL funds 515 FTE, which is a 40 FTE decrease from the FY 2025 estimated FTE usage. The Office of Solicitor continues to execute its enforcement duties vigorously. It is expected to be able to fully perform at the same level throughout the Trump Administration. The Solicitor's Office closely monitors its human resource capabilities.

- d. Madam Secretary, you are reducing the capacity of the Department to protect workers from heat stress at a time when workers need DOL more than ever.

Response:

Setting standards that protect American workers and support the safety and health of the American workforce is a critical overarching goal for the Department of Labor. One of the many ways that the Department is working to fulfill this mission is through a thorough examination of hazards and their mitigation by components of the Department such as the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). OSHA held a public hearing that concluded on July 2, 2025, specifically on the subject of heat injury and illness prevention in outdoor and indoor work settings. The post-hearing comment period is now open and closes on September 30, 2025.

Enforcement via the General Duty clause is only one way that the Department can protect workers from heat illness. Our Compliance Safety and Health Officers (CSHOs) continue to respond to heat-related hazards. In addition to enforcement, we are also utilizing our resources for the greatest and most wide-reaching impact through compliance assistance and employer and worker education regarding heat illness and other workplace hazards.

Rep. Suzanne Bonamici (D-OR)

1. **Job Corps:** On May 29th, the Department announced a “phased pause in operations at contractor-operated Job Corps centers nationwide.”
 - a. Does the Department of Labor intend to re-open these campuses? If so, when?

Response:

Following the June 4, 2025 issuance of the Temporary Restraining Order (TRO) in *NJCA v. DOL*, the Department instructed its impacted center operators to stop all activities related to the notices of termination and/or stop work orders that were issued on or around May 29, 2025. Job Corps-initiated student separations under the instructions provided on or around May 29, 2025 were also ordered to immediately stop. The Department also instructed operators to keep all necessary staff to maintain operations. The Department is continuing program operations in compliance with court orders in *NJCA v. DOL* and *Cabrera v. DOL*.

- b. Does the Department intend to revoke the original May 29th directive to pause Job Corps operations? Will you commit to renew these contracts and to continue Job Corps for FY 2025?

Response:

Following the June 4, 2025 issuance of the Temporary Restraining Order (TRO) in *NJCA v. DOL*, the Department instructed its impacted center operators to stop all activities related to the notices of termination and/or stop work orders that were issued on or around May 29, 2025. Job Corps-initiated student separations under the instructions provided on or around May 29, 2025 were also ordered to immediately stop. The Department also instructed operators to keep all necessary staff to maintain operations. The Department is continuing program operations in compliance with court orders in *NJCA v. DOL* and *Cabrera v. DOL*.

- c. Will the Department of Labor commit to resuming background checks and new

student enrollment for the Job Corps program while Job Corps centers remain open? If so, please provide information on the Department's timeline for resuming background checks.

Response:

The Department has resumed background checks as of August 25, 2025.

- d. How will the Department follow the proper procedure to give the public an opportunity to voice concerns about closing Job Corps centers?

Response:

The Department is committed to complying with all statutory requirements under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), including those outlined in Section 161 (29 U.S.C. § 3209(j)) regarding the closure of Job Corps centers.

- e. There are approximately 4,481 homeless students in Job Corps, some as young as 16 years old. The Department has said they will provide transportation to get students to their home of record, but these 4,481 students do not have a home to return to. How will the Department support these students if the TRO is lifted and the "phased pause" moves forward? Where will the Department send these students?

Response:

Following the issuance of the termination notices on or around May 29, 2025, the Department coordinated with Employment and Training Administration (ETA) Regional Offices to deploy Rapid Response teams and refer affected students and contractor staff to American Job Centers (AJCs) and other workforce system partners for continued access to workforce services including training programs or employment. Additionally, all students provided at least an address and at least one contact person at the time of enrollment, which assisted the Department in supporting their return to their home of record and connecting to the workforce system. The Department has not made any final decisions about future action should the preliminary injunctions be lifted. The Department is committed to ensuring all participants are supported through the transition and connected with the resources they need to succeed as we evaluate the program's possibilities.

- f. Did the Department factor in additional costs and lost potential if these students remain homeless, need to rely on more government services, or enter the criminal justice system?

Response:

The Department's analysis focused strictly on the Program Year 2023 performance data and operating costs.

- g. What is the Department doing to support the thousands of Job Corps staff who are now out of a job because of the "pause"?

Response:

Following the issuance of the termination notices on or around May 29, 2025, the Department coordinated with Employment and Training Administration (ETA) Regional Offices to deploy Rapid Response teams and refer affected students and contractor staff to American Job Centers (AJCs) and other workforce system partners for continued access to workforce services including training programs or employment.

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- h. What is the Department of Labor doing to connect state and local governments with resources for communities affected by Job Corps closures?

Response:

Following the issuance of the termination notices on or around May 29, 2025, the Department coordinated with Employment and Training Administration (ETA) Regional Offices to deploy Rapid Response teams and refer affected students and contractor staff to American Job Centers (AJCs) and other workforce system partners for continued access to workforce services including training programs or employment.

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- i. In announcing the “pause,” the Department of Labor relied on a report that contains disputed facts and conclusions and relied heavily on data from when the program was still recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic. Who were the authors of this report? Please be specific and include whether each person who contributed to the report was assigned to the Department of Labor by DOGE.

Response:

All officials who have been involved in assessing the Department’s commitment to ensuring federal workforce investments deliver meaningful results for both students and taxpayers are DOL employees.

- i. The report states that the cost per graduate at Job Corps is \$155,600, but a report during the first Trump administration, prior to COVID-19, reported the average cost per graduate was \$57,312. Please explain the dramatic

discrepancy between these two figures.

Response:

The Job Corps Transparency Report integrates multiple data sources to provide a data-centric examination of program expenditures and efficiency metrics, aggregating unmanipulated financial data and performance evaluations that are produced by the Department's Office of Job Corps. This report specifically analyzes the most recently available metrics from Program Year 2023, including cost per enrollee and per graduate.

- ii. The report states that Job Corps students are largely hired in minimum wage positions, earning an average of \$16,695 in annualized wages; however, during Program Year (PY) 2023, Job Corps students were placed in jobs earning an average wage of \$17.13 (more than twice the federal minimum wage) and earned annualized wages of more than \$31,000 on average. Please explain the dramatic discrepancy between these two figures.

Response:

The discrepancy is explained by the two different sources used for this information. The average annualized wages of \$16,695 comes from PY 2023 WIOA Performance Data, specifically the Median 2nd Quarter Earnings measure, which includes "participants" enrolled for 60 or more days, to include those who completed the Career Preparation Period (CPP) but were enrolled in Job Corps for 60 or more days. By contrast, \$17.13 is the Graduate and Former Enrollee Placement Average Wage (national) as seen on the PY 2023 Career Transition Services Report Card from JC's Outcome Measurement System. The measure is made up of the sum of hourly wages of graduates and former enrollees placed in a job or the military divided by the number of graduates and former enrollees placed in a job or the military.

Q2 earnings measures include all students who received any pay during that quarter, whereas hourly wage at placement reflects reported earnings at the time of job placement. These differing definitions naturally lead to differences in annualized estimates. Neither is intended for annualization purposes, and Job Corps is not required to collect or calculate annual income after exit.

Possible causes of the difference and the issues with trying to annualize hourly wage or quarterly earnings data:

1. **Partial Quarter Employment:** Some students begin their jobs partway through Q2. In these cases, their Q2 earnings reflect only a portion of the quarter, while their average hourly wage—when annualized (i.e., multiplied by 4)—may overstate their actual earnings for the period. Therefore, neither measure reflects the students' actual annual earnings.
2. **Students in School:** Some individuals captured in UI data are not counted as job placements by Job Corps because their primary activity is postsecondary education. These students may work part-time jobs or participate in work-study programs. Since Job Corps does not include educational placements in hourly wage calculations, their Q2 earnings are typically lower, as their jobs are supplemental and not career focused.

3. **Short Job Tenure:** Some students do not remain in their initial placements for the full quarter. In such cases, the reported \$17.13 hourly wage may overestimate their actual earnings when annualized.
 4. **Overtime Inclusion:** Hourly wages reported by Job Corps may include documented overtime, which can increase the reported average wage above the student's standard base pay and when annualized overestimate their annual earnings.
 5. **Part-Time Hours:** Some students may earn the reported hourly wage but not work full-time hours. Annualizing their wages based on a full-time schedule would therefore overestimate their actual earnings.
- iii. The report states that the Job Corps graduation rate is 38.7%; however, the National Job Corps Association asserts that the current graduation rate is higher, and historically graduation rates have been above 60%. What is the current graduation rate at Job Corps programs?

Response:

Based on Job Corps' preliminary data as of July 14, 2025, the graduation rate for PY 2024 (July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025) is 47.7 percent.

The definition for "graduation" used here is as follows:

- Number of separated students in the reporting period without a Level 1 ZT violation, that were enrolled for 60 or more days, and completed an HSD/HSE and/or a CTT
- Number of separated students in the reporting period including students with a separation due to a Level 1 ZT violation

The program's graduation rate had not been 60 percent or greater since Program Year 2015 when it was 60 percent.

- iv. The Department claims that the report shows that Job Corps is no longer achieving its intended outcomes; however, Job Corps graduates exceeded the wage goals set by the Department in PY 2023. Please clarify the outcomes that Job Corps is failing to meet, as well as evidence from accurate and current data.

Response:

The Department acknowledges that Job Corps graduates exceeded the median earnings goal in Program Year (PY) 2023, and we commend the students and staff who contributed to that outcome. However, wage outcomes represent just one of several WIOA primary indicators of performance.

- v. Does the Department plan on doing an updated transparency report with more recent and accurate program data that is reflective of the current Job Corps population?

Response:

The Department will continue to evaluate the program's efficacy.

2. Make America Skilled Again Block Grant: Last week, the Trump Administration released its plans to cut nearly every workforce development program administered by the Department of Labor and replace these programs with the undefined "Make America Skilled Again" block grant program. These cuts eliminate funding for both the WIOA Youth Formula program and YouthBuild, a program that would logically be a landing spot for displaced Job Corps students.

- a. What workforce development and pre-apprenticeship alternatives will be available to the displaced Job Corps and YouthBuild students?

Response:

The Department believes that MASA grants will serve all workers more efficiently while providing states the flexibility to target resources to the skill needs of their populations. With streamlined administration, a higher percentage of funds can be spent on services for American workers to reach more participants, including low-income youth interested in pre-apprenticeship opportunities.

- b. What specific pre-apprenticeship and registered apprenticeship opportunities will the Department provide to meet the stated goal of one million new apprenticeships per year?

Response:

The President set a goal to reach and surpass 1 million apprentices in the Executive Order on *Preparing Americans for High-Paying Skilled Trades jobs of the Future*. This will be achieved through a multi-year strategy to strengthen and expand registered apprenticeship opportunities.

The Department believes that MASA grants would lead to reduced silos and increased efficiencies in pre-apprenticeship and registered apprenticeship. With streamlined administration, a higher percentage of funds can be spent on services for American workers to reach more participants to meet the administration's goal of one million new apprentices. MASA also will require that a minimum of 10 percent of MASA grant funds are spent on Registered Apprenticeship activities.

Additionally, the Department just awarded nearly \$84 million in grants to 50 states and territories to increase the capacity of Registered Apprenticeship programs, representing an important step toward meeting the Administration's goal of expanding the program to one million active apprentices. The funding advances the expansion of Registered Apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeships in both traditional and emerging industries, including technology, artificial intelligence, advanced manufacturing, supply chain, transportation, building trades, and construction.

- c. The Make America Skilled Again block grant reduces overall funding for the consolidated workforce development programs by \$4.64 billion. What is the justification for these cuts? How will these funds be distributed to states? Which states will lose the most federal funding under the new grant program?

Response:

The Department believes that MASA grants would lead to reduced silos and increased efficiencies in workforce development. With streamlined administration, a higher percentage of funds can be spent on services for American workers to reach more participants. The Department would distribute MASA funds to states and localities through a formula. The Department is ready to work with Congress to implement the MASA proposal through the appropriations process or incorporate it into reauthorization of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

3. **Women’s Bureau:** The president’s FY26 budget eliminates the Women’s Bureau, calling it an “[ineffective policy office that is a relic of the past](#).” This includes repealing the Women in Apprenticeship and Nontraditional Occupations (WANTO) grant program.
- a. How has the Department determined that the Women’s Bureau and its programs are “ineffective”?

Response:

The FY 2026 Budget eliminates the Women’s Bureau, an ineffective policy office that is no longer necessary. The Department of Labor’s mission is to foster, promote, and develop the welfare of wage earners, job seekers, and retirees of the United States; improve working conditions; advance opportunities for profitable employment; and assure work-related benefits and rights. Recognizing the influx of women in the workforce during World War I, Congress created the Women’s Bureau in 1920 to formulate standards and policies to promote the welfare of wage-earning women, improve their working conditions, increase their efficiency, and advance their opportunities for profitable employment, a mission that mirrors that of the Department. Pub. L. 66-259; *see also* Cong. Rec. H5217 (daily ed. Apr. 5, 1920). The landscape of the United States workforce, however, looks very different today than it did 105 years ago. In 1920, the female share of the labor workforce accounted for 20.2% compared to 79.8% for men; in 2023, women were 47.4% of the workforce and men were 52.6%. More women are participating in the workforce and are earning real wages. The Bureau has fulfilled the purpose for which it was established, and other agencies within the Department remain committed to accomplishing the Department’s mission with respect to all wage earners, job seekers, and retirees of the United States.

- b. Without the Women’s Bureau, how does the Department plan to provide research and support for women in the workforce and address the problems they face, including workplace discrimination, equal pay, paid leave, and child care?

Response:

The President’s proposal to Make America Skilled Again will allow the Department to work directly with states to empower them to make determinations about what is best for their workforce – both men and women. We will continue working on commonsense, America First policies that help prepare everyone in our workforce for challenges they may face.

- i. What is the Department’s plan to continue operating the National Database of Childcare Prices, the most comprehensive federal source of child care prices?

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Response:

See the response to 3. b.

