



LEGISLATIVE ALERT

November 14, 2023

Dear Representative:

I am writing on behalf of the AFL-CIO to urge you to vote against the FY 2024 Labor Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies (“LHHS”) Appropriations Act (H.R. 5894) scheduled for floor consideration this week. The AFL-CIO has long argued that funding for worker protections, job training, public health and education are vital to the needs of all Americans. Unfortunately, the Republican allocations for 2024 are grossly inadequate and reflect a misguided and dangerous approach to funding essential programs that serve millions of Americans.

The Republican plan would reduce overall spending by \$64 billion or 28 percent below the FY 2023 enacted level; this includes a 28 percent reduction in Department of Labor funding, a 34 percent cut in Department of Education funding, and a 14 percent cut in Department of Health and Human Services funding. This is the lowest allocation for the LHHS bill since 2008.

Specifically, the legislation slashes funding for the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) by \$99 million or 33 percent, despite the historic increase in union election petitions and unfair labor practice charges. It would cut funding for the Wage and Hour Division by \$75 million, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration by \$95 million, and the Mine Safety and Health Administration by \$63 million, which would lead to a dramatic reduction in enforcement of job safety, minimum wage and overtime laws.

The proposal would reduce critical worker safety and health research and training by \$115 million at the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health. It would also eliminate funding for Adult and Youth Job Training, the Job Corps, the Women’s Bureau and the Bureau of International Labor Affairs. It would cut Title I Grants to local education agencies by almost \$15 billion, and wipe out funding for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. The legislation would also cut Railroad Retirement Board (RRB) administration by \$25 million.

The Title I cuts would remove 224,000 teachers from the classroom. Over 126,000 young workers would be denied job training and employment services and 50,000 would face barriers to employment due to the elimination of the Job Corps. Nearly 51,000 children would lose access to early childhood education due to cuts to Head Start. The RRB cut would force the Board to lay off approximately 23 percent of its workforce, derail an IT modernization project that has already made significant progress, and worsen wait times for railroaders filing for the retirement benefits that they themselves pay for.

The 2024 Labor HHS bill also includes several troubling policy riders. Congress should reject the riders highlighted below and any other riders that infringe on workers’ rights.

NLRB Riders - The bill would prevent the NLRB from applying its current standard for determining whether two or more employers are joint employers under the National Labor Relations Act. It would also prohibit the NLRB from allowing electronic voting in any election to determine a representative for the purposes of collective bargaining.

OSHA Riders - The bill includes a rider, adopted in the 1970's, that excludes small farms (10 or fewer employees) from the OSH Act's coverage. It also includes a rider that would prohibit OSHA from conducting routine programmed safety inspections of establishments with 10 or fewer employees in industries that have a serious injury and illness rate less than the national average.

H-2B Riders - One rider would allow the use of private wage surveys in the H-2B program which have enabled employers to hire at below-average wages-rates. Another would eliminate funding for the enforcement of key labor protections that guarantee a minimum number of work hours for H-2B workers and ensure that H2-B workers will not undercut the wages, benefits and working conditions of U.S. workers.

We urge you to reject this bill, the policy riders described above and any amendments that seek to further cut funding levels, and in the alternative support amendments that seek to restore adequate funding of these vital programs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'William Samuel', written in a cursive style.

William Samuel
Director, Government Affairs