

AFL-CIO

AMERICA'S UNIONS

June 13, 2020

The Honorable Nita M. Lowey, Chairwoman
House Committee on Appropriations
The Capitol H-307
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kay Granger, Ranking Minority Member
House Committee on Appropriations
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairwoman Lowey and Ranking Minority Member Granger:

On behalf of the AFL-CIO, I am writing to express our support for the FY 2021 appropriations bill for the Department of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies (Labor HHS). This bill reflects a continuation of the Committee's gallant effort last year to boost labor programs that had been level-funded for years.

We would like to give special thanks to Subcommittee Chair Rep. Rosa DeLauro for drafting a bill that recognizes the importance of investing in workers, worker protections, health, and education, and rejects many of the proposed cuts called for in the administration's budget proposal. The bill includes \$196.5 billion in overall funding, an increase of \$2.4 billion above the FY2020 enacted level and \$20.8 billion above the President's 2021 budget request.

Specifically, the bill provides a total of \$12.7 billion in funding for the Department of Labor, \$254 million above the FY 2020 enacted level and \$1.6 billion above the administration's budget request. The Employment and Training Administration would get a \$187 million boost over the FY 2020 enacted level, Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act grants would get a \$50 million increase, Job Corps a \$12 million increase, and the Unemployment Insurance program would receive an increase of \$109 million above the FY 2020 level. The bill also includes \$925 million in emergency contingency funding to help States address spikes in unemployment claims due to the pandemic.

The bill includes \$185 million for registered apprenticeships, a \$10 million increase above the FY 2020 enacted level. We support the Committee's mandate to the Department of Labor that these funds be used only for programs registered under the National Apprenticeship Act. In keeping with the purposes of the Act to engage both business and labor, and to ensure that labor intermediaries are given opportunities to apply for competitive grants and contracts, we urge the Committee to require the Secretary to continue funding support for "business and labor" industry partner intermediaries as part of the set-aside for national and local

American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations

815 16th St., N.W. • Washington, D.C. 20006 • 202-637-5000 • www.aflcio.org

RICHARD L. TRUMKA
PRESIDENT

ELIZABETH H. SHULER
SECRETARY-TREASURER

TEFERE GEBRE
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT

intermediaries. We also suggest that states be required to engage both business and labor in state apprenticeship expansion grants.

The bill provides a \$15 million increase for DOL worker protection agencies. The Wage and Hour Division received an increase of \$4 million and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) received a \$12 million increase. The increase in funding comes at a time when OSHA inspection staff levels are at record low levels and when the effects of years of stagnant funding have made it impossible for the agency to address pressing safety and health problems that put workers in danger—in general and even more so now in the midst of a pandemic. Two other critical agencies that are key for improving worker safety through applied research and worker training—the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health and the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences—also received increases in funding.

In addition, the bill includes an increase of \$1.5 billion for the Department of Health and Human Services. It helpfully directs the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to use \$100 million to support Affordable Care Act advertising, outreach, and enrollment. It also includes \$9 billion in emergency supplemental funding to support the public health response to COVID-19, influenza vaccinations, and other needs.

The bill also includes a \$716 million increase for the Department of Education and a \$4 million increase in funding for the National Labor Relations Board. We also commend the Committee for providing an advance appropriation of \$515 million for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB). This increase in funding recognizes that the CPB, along with the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities, bolsters the economy and ensures that all Americans have access to artistic and education content.

Labor HHS Appropriations is the largest non-defense appropriations bill and we are pleased that the Subcommittee recognized the critical role it plays in supporting key federal programs for workers and families. We ask that you vote against any “poison pill” amendments that go against the work of the Subcommittee and instead vote for the bill as written.

Sincerely,



William Samuel
Director, Government Affairs

American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations

815 16th St., N.W. • Washington, D.C. 20006 • 202-637-5000 • www.aflcio.org

RICHARD L. TRUMKA
PRESIDENT

ELIZABETH H. SHULER
SECRETARY-TREASURER

TEFERE GEBRE
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT