AFL-CIO

LEGISLATIVE ALERT

July 10, 2024

The Honorable Tom Cole, Chair
The Honorable Rosa DeLauro, Ranking Member
House Committee on Appropriations
H-307 Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Cole and Ranking Member DeLauro:

The AFL-CIO urges you to vote against the FY 2025 Labor Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies ("LHHS") Appropriations Act scheduled for Committee markup this week. Adequate funding for worker protections, job training, public health and education is essential to the well-being of all working families, but the allocations for FY 2025 contained in this bill are grossly inadequate, reflecting a dangerous disregard for our nation's needs.

The bill would reduce overall spending by almost $25 billion or 11 percent below the FY 2024 enacted level; this includes a 22 percent reduction in Department of Labor funding, a 14 percent cut in Department of Education funding, and a 6 percent cut in funding for the Department of Health and Human Services.

Specifically, the legislation slashes funding for the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) by $99 million, despite historic increases in union election petitions and unfair labor practice charges. It would cut funding for the Wage and Hour Division by $25 million, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration by $75 million, and the Mine Safety and Health Administration by five percent, all which would lead to a dramatic reduction in enforcement of job safety, minimum wage and overtime laws.

The bill would reduce funding for Adult Job Training and Registered Apprenticeships and recklessly eliminate funding for Youth Job Training, the Women's Bureau and the Bureau of International Labor Affairs. The bill would cut Title I Grants to local education agencies by almost $5 billion, resulting in 72,000 teachers being removed from low-income classrooms. It would also wipe out funding for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and cut Railroad Retirement Board (RRB) administration by $26 million.

The 2025 Labor HHS bill also includes several troubling policy riders. The Committee should reject the riders highlighted below and all 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.

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.

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.

Fiduciary Duty Rider - The bill would block the Department of Labor from implementing rules to protect millions of workers who are saving for retirement by requiring financial advisers to provide honest advice free from overcharges and to serve their clients' best interests rather than the advisers' self-interest.

HHS Nursing Home Rider- The bill would block the Department of Health and Human Services from implementing rules and regulations creating a minimum national staffing standard for nursing homes participating in Medicaid and Medicare.

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,

Jody Calemine
Director, Government Affairs