Views and Estimates for FY2003 of the Committee on Education and the Workforce
107th Congress, 2nd Session
February 28, 2002

VIEWS AND ESTIMATES

Members of the Committee on Education and the Workforce are committed to ensuring that every child in America is afforded the highest quality education possible and that every worker in our country is free to pursue the American Dream. Members of the Committee also remain committed to the principle of a balanced budget yet recognize the difficult challenge of allocating resources during a time of war.

During the second session of the 107th Congress, the Committee will continue to pursue an ambitious education agenda that focuses on closing the academic achievement gap for the most disadvantaged students through flexibility, accountability, high standards, and choices for parents. In addition, the Committee will work toward providing a safe and secure workplace for all Americans by improving retirement security, making health care insurance more affordable, and supporting an agenda of common sense reform rather than new Federal programs and regulations.

EDUCATION PRIORITIES

The Committee on Education and the Workforce will continue to work with President Bush to advance a series of education initiatives aimed at creating a culture of achievement by holding schools accountable for improving student academic performance, restoring local control, and empowering parents with choices before schooling begins through college and beyond.

ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

The Committee agrees with President Bush that, although the Federal government properly plays a partnership role in the education of our children, education remains primarily a State and local government responsibility. As reflected in the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, the Federal government should use the comparatively small amount of its investment in elementary and secondary education to encourage systemic education reform in the States that focuses on narrowing the academic achievement gap between disadvantaged students and non-disadvantaged students. In addition, the Committee recognizes its obligation to ensure that children with special education needs have access to the same public education that every other young American enjoys.

The No Child Left Behind Act

During the second session of the 107th Congress, the Committee will work with President Bush to implement H.R. 1, the No Child Left Behind Act, which was signed into law on January 8, 2002. H.R. 1 is a comprehensive overhaul of the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), which was enacted in 1965 and is the principal federal law affecting kindergarten-12 education today. Aimed at creating a culture of achievement that leaves no child behind, H.R. 1 includes each of the President's four education reform pillars: (1) accountability and testing, (2) flexibility and local control, (3) funding for what works, and (4) expanded parental choices.

In order to ensure that another decade does not go by with widening academic achievement gaps, H.R. 1 made significant improvements to current law by placing a priority on academic accountability and granting flexibility to schools and teachers to make decisions how to best meet the needs of disadvantaged students.

Specific reforms enacted in H.R. 1 include:

- Annual State assessments of all children in reading and math in grades 3 through 8.

- Empowering parents with report cards on the academic achievement of their students so parents and communities can better see where achievement gaps remain or widen.

- Public school choice for parents of students enrolled in low performing Title I schools.

- Additional help and expertise for failing schools to help them improve.

- The option of receiving supplemental educational services from a provider of their choice for economically disadvantaged students in persistently failing schools.

- Making schools that continue to fail subject to corrective actions and, eventually, significant measures such as reconstitution.

The Committee is committed to ensuring that States are able to implement efficient and effective accountability systems, which are essential to realizing the President's vision of reform. As Americans demand more and more accountability from their schools, the Committee recognizes a quality State standards and assessment system can give States and communities important, objective information about how our students are doing. The best standards and assessments are those that are developed by and for the State. That is why State accountability for improving student achievement can best be demonstrated through State assessments.

H.R. 1 requires States to implement annual reading and math assessments for grades 3 through 8, which is the key component of President Bush's rigorous plan for holding state and local school districts that use federal funds accountable for improving student academic achievement. States may select and design assessments of their choosing. However, State assessments must: (1) be aligned with State academic standards; (2) allow student achievement to be comparable from year to year; (3) be of objective knowledge; (4) be based on measurable, verifiable and widely accepted professional assessment standards; and (5) not evaluate or assess personal or family beliefs and attitudes. States will have until the 2005/2006 school year to develop and implement these assessments. The Committee recognizes this will be a challenging goal for States, and supports the provision of the necessary resources to ensure the successful implementation of annual assessments.

The Committee believes that America should be a land of equal educational opportunity. Regardless of income or other factors, parents with children in chronically failing schools should be able to choose the best school possible for their children. Low-income parents in disadvantaged communities with failing schools should have the same education choices as affluent parents. Giving all parents this choice will broaden the escape route for students trapped in failing schools. It will also energize the public education system and spur struggling schools to succeed.

Last year, the Congress and the Committee took significant bipartisan action to expand choices for low-income parents by: (1) creating expanded Education Savings Accounts that help parents pay for kindergarten-12 educational expenses; and (2) giving parents with children in chronically failing public schools the right to choose a private tutor and a better-achieving public or charter school.

For example, H.R. 1 allows federal Title I funds (approximately $500 to $1,000 per child) to be used to provide supplemental educational services – including tutoring, after school services, and summer school programs – for children in failing schools. Faith-based providers would be among those eligible to be selected by parents to assist students, establishing an important precedent on the road to equal educational opportunity. Such historic parental empowerment cannot be fully successful if the necessary funds to make it work are not provided. Further, H.R. 1 expands the charter school initiative, generating more opportunities for parents, educators and interested community leaders to create independent schools outside the established system.

This year, Republicans and Democrats in Congress must build on this solid foundation by taking further action to expand parental choice in education. The drive for equal educational opportunity in America doesn't end with the No Child Left Behind Act; it begins there.

The President's proposed education tax credit would expand the bipartisan education reforms in H.R. 1 and help to ensure that no child is left behind. For low-income parents, it could mean the difference between keeping a child trapped in a failing school that refuses to change, or sending a child to a better-achieving school that offers hope.

In the hands of caring parents, information and choice are powerful tools for education reform. The Committee will seek to build on H.R. 1's bipartisan efforts by taking further action in 2002 to expand education choice for parents with children trapped in chronically failing schools. All parents, regardless of income level, should be able to choose the best school possible for their children.

The Committee strongly believes that sufficient funding, in conjunction with the landmark reforms in H.R. 1 and the provision of additional educational choices, will be crucial in helping schools close the achievement gap so that low-income students achieve and succeed academically. However, without accountability and choice, additional funding will do little to improve the academic future for the most disadvantaged students.

Specifically, the Committee supports President Bush's request to increase Title I by $1 billion over last year's level for a total of $11.4 billion. The Committee believes that to fully implement the promise and potential of H.R. 1, States, local educational agencies, and schools will need increased Title I resources. Title I funds are intended to improve academic achievement for the most disadvantaged students and should, at a minimum, be used to close academic achievement gaps, while still promoting gains for higher-achieving students. The Committee on Education and the Workforce recognizes that Title I grants to local educational agencies are important in providing low-income students with the resources they need to meet challenging State academic achievement standards.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

The Committee on Education and the Workforce supports the promises the Federal government made to States and school districts 26 years ago. When Congress passed IDEA in 1975, we committed to pay 40 percent of the average per pupil expenditure to offset the excess cost of educating a disabled child. Since taking control of Congress, Republicans have increased spending for IDEA Part B, Grants to States, which funds direct services to students, by 224 percent and have increased the Federal government contribution of funding from 7.3 percent of the average per pupil expenditure in FY 1996 to approximately 16.5 percent in FY 2002.

President Bush's budget proposal includes an increase in funding for IDEA of $1 billion, for a total $9.7 billion request, the highest level of Federal support ever provided for children with disabilities. The Grants to States program would receive $8.5 billion, a 13.3 percent increase over the 2002 level. By devoting a significant amount of Federal funds to IDEA, local schools will have greater discretion over how to spend local education funds, including how to fund school construction, teacher hiring, professional development, and the many other needs facing most local school districts.

The Committee supports full funding of IDEA Part B, Grants to States, and believes funding increases should be linked to fundamental reform. Further, the Committee will examine the numerous problems with the current IDEA structure, including the over-identification of minority students, as part of the IDEA reauthorization process.

Finally, the Committee does not support making IDEA Part B, Grants to States, a mandatory funding program, as doing so does not guarantee improved services for students with special needs and virtually removes the ability to provide necessary oversight of the program. The Committee remains committed to helping students achieve and to finding a long-term funding solution that has the best interests of children with special education needs at heart.

HIGHER EDUCATION

The Committee on Education and the Workforce is also committed to finding sound solutions to keep the price of attending college reasonable. We addressed this issue during the 1998 reauthorization of the Higher Education Act (HEA) by authorizing a record increase for Pell Grant maximums, while drastically reducing interest rates on student loans and keeping loan fees at a minimum. We also required colleges to provide detailed consumer information with respect to a college's income, expenses and tuition increases in order to enable families to make informed choices when selecting a college.

Pell Grants and Tax Credit Initiatives

Pell Grants will remain a top priority for the Committee. The Pell Grant Program is considered the foundation program for all federal student aid. This is especially true for students from low-income families. Approximately 85 percent of all Pell Grant recipients are students from families with incomes of less than $30,000. We are pleased that the FY 2002 appropriation included another record increase for the maximum Pell grant to $4,000. The Pell Grant Program is a priority for this Committee and this Administration, and we look forward to continuing our efforts to increase funding in this vital student aid program.

The Committee will also continue to monitor the effects of tax cut initiatives put in place to increase educational opportunities for students from middle and lower income families. We will assess their effectiveness, as well as examine the impact of reporting and paperwork requirements on those institutions that participate in student financial aid programs. There are still unanswered questions about the effect these tax credits have on the price of college. These questions will be addressed in the next reauthorization of the Higher Education Act scheduled to take place during the 108th Congress. College cost also remains a concern of the Committee. If colleges continue to increase tuition at more than twice the rate of inflation, tax credits will not go very far in making college more affordable.

Student Loan Interest Rates

The Committee is very pleased with the accomplishment of a long-standing goal – passage of the 2003 student loan interest rate fix. Through hard work and compromise, the Committee was able to develop legislation in a bipartisan, bicameral fashion, gaining the support of the higher education community, as well as student and lending organizations. With passage of the legislation, the Committee has ensured the continued availability of low-cost student loans to students and their families across the country. This stability and availability of funds is critical in the Federal Family Education Loan Program (FFELP) as it continues to serve more than two-thirds of the nation's students and is a vital source of funds for higher education.

Student Loan Administration

Currently, funds for the administration of student financial aid programs are split between discretionary, mandatory, and subsidy accounts. The Bush Administration has proposed the consolidation of $936.4 million for the administration of student financial aid programs, which is spread over three separate accounts, into a single unified discretionary Student Aid

Administrative account. The Committee supports this approach, as it will improve accountability for reducing costs and improving financial controls within the administration of these programs. Merging these accounts into a single discretionary fund would provide Congress with improved oversight over these expenditures and allow for greater accountability.

Regulatory Relief

The Committee has achieved success in its first phase of providing regulatory relief within the Title IV programs of the HEA. Through the Fed Up project, the Committee has received over 3000 suggestions and proposals for regulatory and statutory changes to increase efficiency and reduce burden and redundancy. Many of these proposals came directly from practitioners in the field who deal directly with students and their families on a daily basis. A negotiated rulemaking process currently underway will be completed by the end of this Congress and will provide for meaningful regulatory reform. The Committee will develop and bring forward a technical amendments bill to address those proposals for relief that need statutory adjustments. This process will then lead the Committee into the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act scheduled for the 108th Congress. The Committee remains committed to improving access to quality education and looks forward to continuing its work with this Administration, as well as the higher education community, students and parents, in a productive and collaborative fashion.

Minority Serving Institutions

Finally, the Committee will build on the successes of the last Congress in addressing the needs of minority serving institutions. Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs), Tribally Controlled Colleges and Universities, and other minority serving institutions play a vital role in recruiting and educating some of our nation's most disadvantaged students. However, these institutions often lack necessary resources and infrastructure. We applaud the President's continued commitment to increase funding for HBCUs and for HSIs by 30 percent between 2001 and 2005.

In FY 2002, Congress increased funding for Strengthening Historically Black Colleges and Universities from $185 million to $206 million, and increased spending for Historically Black Graduate Institutions (HBGIs) from $45 million to $49 million. In FY 2002, funding for HSIs increased from $68.5 million to $86 million. We support President Bush's proposal to further increase that funding in FY 2003 to $213 million for HBCUs, $51 million for HBGIs and $89 million for HSIs.

The Committee will continue a series of hearings and forums across the country to visit these institutions, highlight their successes, and discuss their particular needs with college presidents, faculty, and other interested parties. The information we gather will allow us, in partnership with the institutions, to forge a bold "action agenda" to help provide the resources they need to educate the students they serve.

Financial Management Oversight of The Department of Education

The Committee will also continue its oversight of the Department of Education's financial management. For the last three years of the past Administration, the Department failed three consecutive annual audits of its financial statements. In addition, the General Accounting Office and the Department of Education's Inspector General have documented inadequate internal controls that may have allowed improper payments, and we know of several instances of fraud committed against the Department.

We commend Secretary Paige for creating a Management Improvement Team to address these outstanding issues. The Team identified and addressed over 600 recommendations from past audits related to financial, management and information system weaknesses. In October 2001, the Secretary issued a detailed, long-term plan, called the Blueprint for Management Excellence, for transforming the Department of Education into a high-performance organization. The Blueprint sets goals for management improvements that will reduce further waste, fraud and abuse of taxpayer dollars. The Committee will continue to review the Department's progress in achieving these goals, looking toward a clean audit of its financial statements for fiscal year 2002.

Welfare and Child Care

Welfare reauthorization will be a top priority for the Committee this session. This Committee played a central role in crafting the mandatory work requirements and Welfare-to-Work provisions that make up the heart of the new system and will work on legislation to continue and enhance the historic welfare reform legislation enacted in 1996. Welfare reform has been a dramatic success. The caseload across the country has dropped over 50 percent since the passage of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grant. States have made significant investments in work programs and child care to support working families. Employment among single mothers continues to rise, resulting in higher earnings for families and declines in child poverty.

The Committee supports the President’s proposal to strengthen the work components of the law in order to continue to move people to self-sufficiency. The Committee will seek to strengthen the work participation requirements and enhance opportunities for success in employment.

In addition, the Committee will seek to increase the coordination of programs to support work opportunities. Employment and training programs funded through the TANF grant are optional partners in the One-Stop career centers that constitute the core of the business-led workforce development system. In many states, the TANF system and the workforce development and one-stop systems are overseen by different entities at the state and local levels. Yet, both operate significant work programs.

Further, the Committee will reauthorize the Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG), which provides dollars to States to subsidize the cost of childcare for low-income families. States set eligibility within federal parameters, reimbursement rates, and quality standards and administer the program. Funding for the CCDBG has more than doubled in the last five years to

$2.1 billion, and the President proposes to maintain this funding. Additional available childcare funding includes mandatory dollars authorized by the Ways and Means Committee and the TANF block grant.

The Committee recognizes that childcare assistance is critical to allow mothers to obtain and retain employment. Largely as a result of welfare reform, there are unprecedented numbers of women with children who are in the workforce. For many low-income families, finding care can be difficult and in many states demand exceeds the supply of available care.

CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE

In his State of the Union message, President Bush called on all Americans to serve their country and announced new ways for Americans to help those in need and promote the common good. Under an Executive Order signed by the President, the newly formed USA Freedom Corps Council will manage the citizen service initiative. The USA Freedom Corps will have three major components: (1) a newly created Citizen Corps to engage citizens in homeland security; (2) an improved and enhanced AmeriCorps and Senior Corps under the Corporation for National and Community Service; and (3) a strengthened Peace Corps.

A major part of the USA Freedom Corps will be the programs of the Corporation for National and Community Service including AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, and Learn and Serve America. In support of the President's challenge to every American to serve, the Committee will work with the Administration to achieve the following objectives: (1) support and encourage the greater engagement of citizens in volunteering; (2) provide greater assistance to secular and faith-based community organizations, including those that address the homeland security needs of the nation; and (3) make federal support more accountable and responsive to State and local need. The principal mechanism for achieving those objectives is reauthorizing the Corporation for National and Community Service and improving its programs.

WORKFORCE PRIORITIES

During the second session of 107th Congress, the Committee will work to ensure the future of American workers and their families. We will aggressively endeavor to create security for families, build flexibility in the workplace, bring fairness to all workers, and implement common sense solutions to everyday problems in the workplace. The Committee fundamentally believes American workers and entrepreneurs are entitled to modern workplace laws that reflect the challenges and opportunities of the New Economy. We support making health insurance more accessible and affordable for all working Americans and provide patient protections to ensure patients receive the care they are entitled to without creating new bureaucracy or litigation. We will work to improve retirement security of American workers by expanding small business retirement plans, encouraging workers to save more, making pensions more secure, and cutting red tape prohibiting employers from establishing pension plans. We will pursue policies that improve worker health and safety by encouraging cooperation, not confrontation, in the workplace.

RETIREMENT SECURITY FOR WORKERS AND THEIR FAMILIES

Building on the passage of H.R. 2269, the "Retirement Security Advice Act," during the first session of the 107th Congress, the Committee will continue its efforts to modernize the Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA), the federal law governing private pension plans. H.R. 2269, which awaits action in the U.S. Senate, represents an important first step in this effort by addressing the dilemma many workers face in deciding how to invest their vital retirement savings. The bill would allow employers to provide their workers with access to professional investment advice, as long as the advisers are held to tough fiduciary standards requiring that they act at all times in the interest of beneficiaries, and as long as they fully disclose to plan beneficiaries their fees and any potential conflicts. The Committee will continue to explore ways of providing workers with the resources they need to increase and protect their retirement savings.

In the wake of the Enron bankruptcy, the Committee will examine the broader issues raised by this tragedy, with particular attention given to its implications for our private pension system. Through a series of hearings, the Committee will review the facts of the Enron situation and consider the Bush Administration's pension reform proposal. The Committee will then proceed with legislative action aimed at preventing a recurrence of the Enron tragedy, along with other pension law changes that will further protect workers retirement savings.

Additionally, the Committee will consider again those provisions of H.R. 10, the Comprehensive Retirement Security and Pension Reform Act of 2001 that were not included in Public Law 107-16. These provisions, if enacted, will make it easier for small businesses to establish and maintain defined benefit plans, create an additional Saver Summit, and enhance the missing participant program of the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation.

The Committee will continue to develop proposals to modernize outdated rules governing the investment of pension fund assets, such as the so-called prohibited transaction rules, in order to make those investments more efficient while still protecting pension plan assets. The Committee will also explore new ideas for pension plan design that would spur expanded retirement security opportunities for American workers in the New Economy. Finally, the Committee will continue its review of issues related to the growing problem of providing retiree health coverage to America's aging population.

ACCESS TO QUALITY HEALTH CARE

The Committee supports the Administration's goal of making health insurance more affordable for our nation's 38.7 million uninsured individuals. This year the Committee will continue its consideration of proposals such as the Association Health Plans that will provide more individuals with access to quality health care. The Committee is also deeply concerned about the costs of health care premiums for the vast majority of Americans who receive their health insurance through their employer. Given the 8-15 percent increase in premiums for employer-sponsored coverage, the Committee will continue to evaluate changes in health care policy with rising costs in mind. Because 128 million Americans obtain health coverage through their private sector employer, the Committee takes very seriously its role in regulating these plans through the Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA).

During the first session of the 107th Congress, the House passed H.R. 2563, a bill intended to improve the quality and accessibility of health care coverage. The Committee will continue its work to oversee ERISA as the Congress moves forward with the Patients' Bill of Rights. The Committee will advocate strong federal standards for a speedy external review process to solve disputed medical claims and provide needed treatment as well as reasonable federal liability standards. In addition, the Committee expects to consider legislation that addresses the issue of mental health parity in health care coverage.

Though the Committee supports the President's tax credit for uninsured individuals, we believe the funds should also be available for individuals to purchase employer-sponsored coverage. Many individuals receive an offer of insurance from their employer but are simply unable to afford the premium. To allow these employees to use the new tax credit to complement their employer's contribution will ensure that employees have access to high quality, affordable plans in the employer-based market in addition to other options in the individual market. To help unemployed individuals find health care coverage, the Committee will continue to work with the Administration to pass new National Emergency Grants (NEG) that allow dislocated workers to use NEG funds to purchase health care coverage.

The Committee also shares the Administration's goal of addressing patient safety and improving health care quality. Many employer-sponsored health plans are leading the way by offering innovative health care options to maximize employee and patient choice and utilize large-group buying power to motivate quality. The Committee will spend time this year investigating these innovative approaches.

Just as the Administration highlights the advances in the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of diseases by the National Institutes of Health, the Committee recognizes the potential of the recently completed "rough map" of the Human Genome. This research makes possible a wide universe of genetic research and discovery. The advanced progress of the Human Genome research has fostered a public policy discussion about who should have access to our unique genetic information and what role this information will play in health care treatment and research, health insurance coverage, and employment. Legislation to prevent genetic discrimination offers a promise and a challenge. The Committee will continue its efforts to address the issue of genetic-nondiscrimination and to craft bipartisan legislation to protect individuals from discrimination without overly burdening employers and health plans.

We share the Administration's view that, while the private health insurance market has made dramatic strides to update health care coverage, Medicare has lagged behind. In 1998, 73 percent of Medicare beneficiaries had alternative insurance. Many of these beneficiaries relied on employer-sponsored retiree health coverage. Yet, just as the baby-boomer generation prepares to retire, the prevalence of employer-sponsored retiree health coverage is declining. Particularly as long-term Medicare reform proves difficult to accomplish, the employer-sponsored retiree health care system has never been more important. This year, the Committee will continue its investigation of potential solutions to this looming crisis.

WORKPLACE SAFETY

The Committee will continue to work for reform of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). We look forward to working with the Administration to promote safety and health in the workplace through increased compliance assistance to employers, in addition to enforcement. The Committee will continue to look at ways to improve the regulatory process at OSHA, particularly as related to updating outdated standards, without sacrificing all of the transparency, notice, comment and due process requirements for responsible rulemaking. In addition, the Committee looks forward to innovative approaches at OSHA to encourage voluntary programs and assistance that will maximize efforts to improve safety and health for all working Americans.

The Committee also plans to continue its review of the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA). Following procedures essentially unchanged since the 1970's, MSHA conducts pre-set inspections of underground and surface mines (including mineral, stone, and sand quarries), regardless of the relative safety or compliance record of the particular mine site. Following up on hearings held in the last two Congresses, the Committee will consider whether worker safety and health might be better served if some modifications are made to the Federal MSH Act which are more in line with the reality of today's mining industry.

FAIRNESS IN THE WORKPLACE

The Committee will promote legislation to modernize and strengthen the protections provided to members of labor unions under the Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act of 1959 (LMRDA). The legislation will focus on implementing the recommendations of witnesses who testified during the Committee's series of nine hearings addressing "union democracy" begun during the 105th Congress. The hearings looked at problems union members are having in retaining a full, equal, and democratic voice in their union affairs and ways Congress can address those problems. The LMRDA, often referred to as the Landrum-Griffin Act, is the law that most directly governs the relationship between rank-and-file union members and their elected leaders. Evidence and hearings thus far suggest a significant erosion of the principles of union democracy in certain unions around the country. The Committee's reform effort will seek to ensure that union management and direction is fully accountable to the union's members.

In addition, the Committee continues to believe that it is morally wrong for workers to have money taken from their paychecks without being given adequate notice by a union how these monies will be used, and having an educated opportunity to prevent monies that will not be used for legitimate union purposes from being taken at all. Accordingly, the Committee will continue efforts to ensure that paycheck protection rights are fully extended to workers and will use its oversight authority to investigate complaints concerning a serious lack of effectiveness of these protections under current law.

The Committee will also continue its oversight over the Department of Labor's Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP) and the executive order it enforces (which mandates that all federal contractors undertake written affirmative action plans that include numerical goals and timetables) and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). The EEOC enforces: (1) Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; (2) the Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA) of 1967, as amended; (3) the Equal Pay Act (EPA) of 1963; (4) Title I and Title V of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990; (5) Section 501 and 505 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended; and (6) the Civil Rights Act of 1991.

Reform of Outdated Laws to Meet the Needs of the 21st Century Workforce

The Committee will continue its examination of proposals that would update the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938. The Committee will also look at impediments within current law that prevent employers and employees from working out mutually beneficial arrangements regarding scheduling and compensation. As part of that review, the Committee will look at ways to change the law to allow employers and employees to utilize flexible arrangements that would better enable workers to meet their work and family or personal responsibilities.

Clarification of Confusing Regulations on Family Leave

The Committee will continue to review the inconsistent and often confusing regulations implementing the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) and will work with the Administration to better administer the Act consistent with Congressional intent.