

**Chairman Roy Blunt Opening Statement  
Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services,  
Education and Related Agencies**

**Hearing to Review the FY2019 Budget Request for the U.S. Department of Labor**

**April 12, 2018**

*(As prepared for delivery)*

Good morning. Thank you, Secretary Acosta, for appearing before the Subcommittee today to discuss the Department of Labor's fiscal year 2019 budget request.

The Department's request, once again, is under significant budgetary constraints this year. The proposal reduces funding for the Department by \$1.3 billion, a decrease of 11 percent.

We look forward to hearing your testimony and discussing your priorities, new proposals, and programs you think we should consider scaling back.

Last week we continued to receive good news about the strength of the American economy, with the unemployment rate remaining steady at 4.1 percent - its lowest level in over 17 years. However, millions of Americans are still underemployed or have stopped looking for work altogether.

We need to make sure that Americans have access to training programs – especially those that provide on-the-job training and those focused on in-demand jobs like healthcare and energy.

Having a highly-skilled workforce is critical, but it is only half of the equation. We must also continue advancing common-sense solutions to create an economic environment where businesses can thrive and create good, well-paying jobs.

As we saw with the last Administration, excessive government regulations and overreach are major impediments to job growth.

To grow the economy and decrease unemployment, we must rein in unnecessary regulatory burdens that make it harder for businesses to create jobs.

The Senate, working with the Administration, has taken important steps toward eliminating regulations that provide little to no benefit. Teamed with the recently passed tax reform bill, we will continue working to ensure our job creators can succeed.

In my home state of Missouri, companies are expanding the workforce, growing their businesses, and showing their employees how much they're valued in a growing economy.

Just last week, a Springfield-based solar company announced it will add 30 jobs and expand operations in the Springfield and Kansas-city areas. Every one of Mid-AM Metal Forming's 140 employees in Rogersville, Missouri will receive a cash bonus this year. Larger companies, like Walmart and Boeing, are expanding benefits and planning major new capital investments.

This has been a year of significant growth and record optimism for the U.S. economy and the American workforce. We need to make sure the federal government continues to support programs to prepare workers for higher skill jobs, help those who have lost their jobs get back on their feet, protect workers' rights and benefits, and support safe and productive workplaces.

As the FY2019 appropriations process moves forward, I know we will continue to work together to identify priorities and find common ground on how best to responsibly allocate taxpayers' resources.

Thank you.

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