

AFL-CIO

LEGISLATIVE ALERT

September 9, 2025

The Honorable Tom Cole, Chairman
The Honorable Rosa DeLauro, Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
H-307 The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Cole and Ranking Member DeLauro:

The AFL-CIO urges you to oppose the committee mark of the FY 2026 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies (Labor HHS) Appropriations bill scheduled for consideration today. This bill imposes devastating cuts to training, health and safety, labor law enforcement, and other critical programs upon which millions of working people rely.

The bill includes \$197.5 billion in discretionary funding which is a reduction of \$23.9 billion below the FY 2025 enacted level. The legislation would reduce funding for the Department of Labor (DOL) by 30 percent, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) by 6 percent, and diminish the Department of Education's (DOE) budget by 15 percent.

Specifically, the bill cuts 35 percent from DOL's Employment and Training Administration. Within this reduction the bill includes: a \$1.8 billion, or 63 percent, cut to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Grants; eliminates funding for WIOA Adult and Youth Job Training; and includes a \$880 million, or 50 percent, cut to Job Corps. These cuts will do irreparable harm to a public workforce development system that was created to provide job search and training-related services to laid-off workers, disadvantaged adults, young people, Native Americans, formerly incarcerated people and others. Likewise, crippling cuts to Job Corps would place at risk the operation and sustainability of some of the most effective career training programs for underserved youth.

The bill includes a \$259 million decrease in funding for worker protection agencies. The Wage and Hour Division is cut by \$25 million, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration is cut by \$50 million and the Mine Safety and Health Administration is cut by \$40 million. These cuts to worker safety and health programs will result in increased disease, injuries and deaths on the job.

The bill also eliminates funding for the Bureau of International Labor Affairs (ILAB). ILAB does critical work to fight child labor, forced labor and human trafficking and the elimination of funding for ILAB would eviscerate ongoing efforts to strengthen the capacity and commitments to meet our high standards for labor protections.

Moreover, the bill eliminates the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs, the DOL Women's Bureau, and the Women in Apprenticeship and Nontraditional Occupations Grant Program which helps to expand pathways for women to enter and lead in all industries. The legislation also eliminates funding for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, costing jobs in communities across the country, and includes a \$99 million cut to the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB). The NLRB is already sorely underfunded. These cuts will undermine the effective enforcement of workers' right to collectively bargain and delay justice for workers unlawfully fired from their jobs for exercising their rights.

The bill cuts funding for the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and State and local health departments. Included in these cuts is a \$51 million cut to the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH). NIOSH is already operating with a relatively small budget and cuts will undoubtedly undermine the agency's ability to provide guidance, training and assistance for dangerous industries that help workers and employers fix their own hazards.

The bill destroys support for children in K-12 elementary schools by slashing DOE resources by \$12 billion, including cutting Title I Grants to Local Educational Agencies by nearly \$5 billion. The bill also eliminates funding for teacher training opportunities, a cut of more than \$2 billion below 2025, as school districts work to improve literacy rates nationwide.

Finally, the bill includes multiple problematic policy riders including, but not limited to, a rider preventing enforcement of a minimum staffing standard for nursing facilities participating in the Medicare and Medicaid programs, a rider prohibiting the NLRB from allowing electronic voting in any election, a rider that excludes small farms (10 or fewer employees) from OSHA coverage, a rider that would prohibit OSHA from conducting routine programmed safety inspections of establishments with 10 or fewer employees, and a rider prohibiting the implementation and enforcement of the "Employee or Independent Contractor Classification Under the Fair Labor Standards Act" final rule.

We encourage you to reject the bill's funding cuts and the included policy riders and in the alternative support amendments that restore adequate funding of these programs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jody Calemine". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jody" being more prominent and the last name "Calemine" following in a similar style.

Jody Calemine
Director, Government Affairs