



# House Committee on Education & the Workforce

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# Fact Sheet

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## Top 20 Ways a Pelosi Majority Would Harm Parents, Students, Workers, & Taxpayers

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Since House Republicans regained the majority in 1995, the Education & the Workforce Committee has pursued a reform agenda to restore accountability in the classroom; increase flexibility for parents whose children attend underperforming schools; expand access to college; and bolster workplace health and safety, the availability of affordable health care, and retirement security for American workers. **This progress now is at risk.** Would-be Democrat leaders of the Education & the Workforce Committee have very different and often radical values and priorities, and their policy agenda on behalf of American students and workers would reflect this stark reality. Below are the top 20 examples of key education and workforce policy shifts that would occur if House Democrats set the legislative agenda.

The Issue	House Republicans Have...	House Democrats Would...
1. <b>School Choice</b>	Secured victory after victory on behalf of parents seeking more options for their children's education. Under the No Child Left Behind Act, parents now enjoy public school choice and the option of free tutoring services for children attending underperforming schools. Republicans also have led the charge in crafting the first federally-funding private school choice program – for children attending Washington, D.C. public schools. Republican education leaders are seeking to expand this program nationally, continuing the momentum enjoyed by school choice advocates.	Strip parents of their options to send their child to a better-performing school, while slamming the brakes on efforts to expand school choice for low- and middle-income families.
2. <b>Union Democracy</b>	Protected secret ballot elections for union organization. Under current law, workers have the right to a secret ballot election, conducted by the National Labor Relations Board, on deciding whether to unionize. Republicans are building support for legislation to reinforce the need for unions to win a majority of worker support in an anonymous, secret ballot election and eliminating any shroud of organized labor intimidation.	Force unionization in a decidedly undemocratic manner. The would-be Democrat Chairman of the Education & the Workforce Committee authored legislation to require employers to recognize unions based on cards signed by workers exposed to concerted pressure, harassment, and intimidation by organized labor bosses intent on holding power.

<p>3. <b>Rights of Faith-Based Groups</b></p>	<p>Fought to protect the rights of faith-based organizations participating or seeking to participate in the nation's job-training, community services, and early childhood education systems. The GOP-led Congress has advanced legislation acknowledging that faith-based groups should not have their religious beliefs held against them and should be forced to abandon their religious identities as a condition of participating in the delivery of federal services.</p>	<p>Unravel protections for faith-based organizations. In spite of the fact that President Clinton signed into law many measures that have opened the door to faith-based groups' participation in a variety of federal programs, House Democrats have fought these protections consistently and would turn back the clock on the rights of faith-based groups seeking to serve their communities.</p>
<p>4. <b>Armed Services Recruiting</b></p>	<p>Protected the rights of Armed Forces recruiters to visit federally-funded high schools and college campuses and inform high school students about their options to serve their nation.</p>	<p>Deny Armed Forces recruitment efforts at U.S. colleges, while making it more difficult for high school students to learn about their military service options.</p>
<p>5. <b>Financial Aid for Drug Convicts</b></p>	<p>Prohibited federal or state drug convicts from receiving federal college financial aid.</p>	<p>Repeal this drug law, allowing those convicted of a federal or state drug crime to receive federally-funded financial aid. This would require the Department of Education to award aid to those who have been found guilty of selling or possessing drugs.</p>
<p>6. <b>Contraception in Schools</b></p>	<p>Resisted a federally-led effort to provide for the distribution of condoms and other contraception in public elementary and high schools. Decisions to do so remain at the local level.</p>	<p>Champion a federally-charged effort to distribute contraception in the classrooms of public grade schools and high schools.</p>
<p>7. <b>Welfare Reform</b></p>	<p>Built upon the 1996 GOP-led welfare reform law by updating state caseload reduction credits – renewing an incentive for states to reduce their welfare caseloads – and pushed for a full 40-hour workweek for welfare recipients (up from 30), eight hours of which could be dedicated to vocational education for a limited period of time.</p>	<p>Weaken welfare reform by increasing the amount of activities which could count as work for welfare recipients. Democrats have proposed replacing actual work or vocational education with postsecondary education, essentially allowing welfare recipients to go to school while receiving welfare benefits intended for those on the job.</p>
<p>8. <b>Expanding a Controversial Wage Mandate into the Private Sector</b></p>	<p>Exposed a troubling provision in the Senate Democrat immigration bill that would expand a federal construction program mandate (under the controversial Depression-era Davis-Bacon Act) to private sector projects – including those led by small businesses – as part of a new guest worker program.</p>	<p>Expand the Davis-Bacon wage mandate to private employers, forcing employers to pay foreign guest workers more than American workers doing the same job in the same city.</p>
<p>9. <b>In-State Tuition for Illegals</b></p>	<p>Shed light on a Democrat attempt to allow states to provide in-state college tuition to illegal immigrants. The move was called “misguided” and “shockingly bad policy” by witnesses in a hearing held by the Education &amp; the Workforce Committee.</p>	<p>Repeal a 1996 law that prohibits states from providing in-state tuition rates to illegal aliens unless the state also offers the same benefit to all U.S. citizens.</p>

<p><b>10. Health Care Access</b></p>	<p>Advanced legislation to allow small businesses to band together through associations and purchase quality health care for workers and their families at a lower cost. The bill would increase small businesses' bargaining power with health care providers, give them freedom from costly state-mandated benefit packages, and lower their costs by as much as 30 percent.</p>	<p>Establish a complex \$50 billion taxpayer-funded, federal government-run health care program that imposes new mandates, such as requiring small employers to pay 50 percent of premiums for employees, and more than 1,500 state mandates that make up 15 percent of the rising cost of health insurance. Under this plan, employers would face an impossible dilemma: meet these conditions, which may strap a business to the point of going under, or else.</p>
<p><b>11. Workplace Safety</b></p>	<p>Advanced legislation that recognizes that safe working conditions are primarily the result of efforts by employers and employees, not arbitrary federal Occupational Safety &amp; Health Administration (OSHA) enforcement. A 2004 federal report noted that voluntary partnerships between OSHA and employers – and championed by the GOP-led Congress – “have considerably reduced their rates of injury and illness” and have fostered “better working relationships with OSHA, improved productivity, and decreased worker compensation costs.”</p>	<p>Return to Clinton-era OSHA policies grounded in an adversarial approach to setting and enforcing workplace safety standards. While those policies were in place, many employers were reluctant to call the agency for assistance in making their workplaces safer for fear of triggering punitive inspections and arbitrary fines.</p>
<p><b>12. Job Training Programs</b></p>	<p>Aimed to make federal job training programs more efficient by streamlining services and reducing inefficient, duplicative offices and programs. This would strengthen the 1998 GOP-led Workforce Investment Act, which transformed federal job training programs into a one-stop shop for job seekers and returned more power to state and local providers of job training and employment services.</p>	<p>Settle for the status quo – leaving duplicative programs in place, allowing red tape to remain unchecked, and leaving job-seekers to deal with programs that are not as efficient and effective as they could be.</p>
<p><b>13. School Construction</b></p>	<p>Respected the rights of states and local communities to make school funding and construction decisions, without heavy-handed federal guidance or mandates, while saving taxpayers billions by resisting attempts to establish an unprecedented federal intrusion into education.</p>	<p>Demand that taxpayers bankroll a vast, new federal school construction program, ignoring the unique needs and decisions of states and local school districts while committing billions to an untested federal program.</p>
<p><b>14. Student Loans</b></p>	<p>Preserved balance and competition in federal student loan programs by supporting both private (the federally-funded, privately-run FFEL) and federal (Direct Loans) college aid programs. This competition has generated more efficiency and accountability on behalf of college students and their parents.</p>	<p>Replace the competitive, dual-program college loan system with a single federally-administered program to which all students must turn if they seek student loans. In spite of concerns about the federal government's ability to manage such a massive program – particularly with no outside competitive forces in place to encourage efficiency – House Democrats have long opposed a public and private structure while embracing a single, federal program for student loans.</p>

<p><b>15. State Higher Education Funding Mandates</b></p>	<p>Invested historic amounts of funding in federal college student aid programs, with some \$90 billion in federal resources headed to fund student aid programs this year – from loans and grants to work-study programs and education tax benefits. That’s nearly triple what it was just a decade ago. This dramatic influx in student aid comes without placing heavy-handed Washington funding mandates on states.</p>	<p>Pursue policies that impose requirements on states to set specific funding levels for their public colleges and universities. Such policies would not take into account states’ unique budget circumstances and fiscal realities.</p>
<p><b>16. Red Tape in Special Education Programs</b></p>	<p>Reauthorized federal education laws for students with disabilities by advancing reforms to reduce the federal paperwork burden for teachers; provide greater flexibility for local school districts to improve early intervention strategies; reduce the number of children who are wrongly placed in special education classes; reduce litigation and restore trust between parents and school districts; and align special education programs with the No Child Left Behind Act.</p>	<p>Burden special education teachers with more paperwork, more red tape requirements, and more litigation by focusing more on compliance with complex rules than producing academic results for children with disabilities.</p>
<p><b>17. New Entitlement Program</b></p>	<p>Supported unprecedented increases in federal funding for special education funding – more than triple the amount provided when the GOP regained the congressional majority in 1995. The latest influx of funding inches the government closer than ever to reaching the goal of paying 40 percent of the average per pupil expenditure on special education.</p>	<p>Create a costly new entitlement program that would require taxpayers to spend required sums each year on special education, with indexed increases guaranteed each year after. Not only would this place programs on federally-funded auto-pilot, in spite of the GOP-led glide path toward full funding for special education in recent years, but it would undermine Congress’ ability to demand results in return for taxpayer dollars spent on these programs.</p>
<p><b>18. Academic Bill of Rights</b></p>	<p>Crafted protections – incorporated in an Academic Bill of Rights – that strike a balance between ensuring college students are not discriminated against because of their political or ideological perspectives, while also protecting the fundamental rights of institutions to maintain their unique character and identity. The protections also ensure the federal government will not influence the curriculum being taught in colleges.</p>	<p>Embrace ivory tower-oriented political correctness imposed on scores of college students throughout the country. In the 109th Congress, House Democrats opposed legislation to create an Academic Bill of Rights, which would make clear that students should not face discrimination based on their ideology or political perspective.</p>
<p><b>19. Competition for Grants</b></p>	<p>Supported competition for federal education and training grants to ensure the most capable and competent grantees receive limited federal resources.</p>	<p>Turn a blind eye to the need for more competition in the federal education and training grant process. Settling for a grant award process that does not place a premium on competition means grantees will not be held accountable for the services they provide and would ask taxpayers to foot the bill for a grant system built on such low standards.</p>
<p><b>20. Illegal Immigration Enforcement</b></p>	<p>Passed legislation to strengthen illegal enforcement and stiffen penalties for employers who knowingly hire illegal immigrants. These measures are part of a broader border security and enforcement bill.</p>	<p>Finally join the illegal immigration debate if they offered any serious enforcement legislation at all. As House Republicans have led on border security, House Democrats have watched from the sidelines.</p>