

[Committee Print]

REPORT OF OVERSIGHT PLAN
OF THE
COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE

MR. BOEHNER, from the Committee on Education and the Workforce, submitted to the Committee on Government Reform and the Committee on House Administration the following.

REPORT
OVERSIGHT PLAN
OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE

1. House Rule X, Clause 2(d)(1)

Each standing committee of the House is required to adopt formally an oversight plan at the beginning of each year. Specifically, Rule X, 2(d)(1) states in part:

[E]ach standing committee of the House shall, in a meeting that is open to the public and with a quorum present, adopt its oversight plan for that Congress. Such plan shall be submitted simultaneously to the Committee on Government Reform and to the Committee on House Administration.

2. Jurisdiction of the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

Rule X of the Rules of the House vests in the Committee on Education and the Workforce (Committee) with jurisdiction over issues dealing with students, education, workers, and workplace policy.

1. *Child Labor.*
2. *Gallaudet University and Howard University and Hospital.*
3. *Convict labor and the entry of goods made by convicts into interstate commerce.*
4. *Food programs for children in schools.*
5. *Labor standards and statistics.*
6. *Education or labor generally.*
7. *Mediation and arbitration of labor disputes.*
8. *Regulation or prevention of importation of foreign laborers under contract.*
9. *Workers' compensation.*
10. *Vocational rehabilitation.*
11. *Wages and hours of labor.*
12. *Welfare of miners.*
13. *Work incentive program.*

3. General Oversight Responsibilities

According to House Rule X, Clause 2(a):

The various standing committees shall have general oversight responsibilities as provided in paragraph (b) in order to assist the House in – (1) its analysis, appraisal, and evaluation of –

(A) the application, administration, execution, and effectiveness of Federal laws; and

(B) conditions and circumstances that may indicate the necessity or desirability of enacting new or additional legislation; and

(2) its formulation, consideration, and enactment of changes in Federal laws, and of such additional legislation as may be necessary or appropriate.

(b)(1) In order to determine whether laws and programs addressing subjects within the jurisdiction of a committee are being implemented and carried out in accordance with the intent of Congress and whether they should be continued, curtailed, or eliminated, each standing committee (other than the Committee on Appropriations) shall review and study on a continuing basis –

(A) the application, administration, execution, and effectiveness of laws and programs addressing subjects within its jurisdiction;

(B) the organization and operation of Federal agencies and entities having responsibilities for the administration and execution of laws and programs addressing subjects within its jurisdiction.

4. Exercise of Oversight Responsibilities

The Committee takes seriously its responsibility to conduct oversight and investigation, and is therefore committed to ensuring that government agencies, departments, and programs within in its jurisdiction:

- o Focus on their appropriate federal mission;
- o Work in an effective and efficient manner; and
- o Consistently follow Congressional intent in their respective activities and operations.

Accordingly, and in keeping with the Rules of the House and the principles of oversight and investigation, the Committee has identified six major projects for the 109th Congress. These projects are:

Higher Education: The Committee will thoroughly examine the laws and regulations governing the Higher Education Act (HEA), with the goal of increasing access to postsecondary education for low and middle-income students and restoring the HEA’s original focus on this mission. The Committee will examine issues of quality and accountability, including the causes and potential remedies for the “graduation gap” that continues to exist between disadvantaged students and their peers at traditional American colleges and universities. The Committee will also work to examine the issue of skyrocketing costs within postsecondary education, and the role federal spending increases may be playing in the ongoing hyperinflation in college costs, which hurts parents, students, and taxpayers. In addition, within the

reauthorization of the HEA, the Committee will work with Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Hispanic-Serving Institutions, and other minority-serving institutions to review opportunities to further strengthen and improve aid to these schools.

Retirement Security: The Committee will continue to monitor the Department of Labor's activities with respect to its efforts to protect the integrity and viability of private pension and welfare plans covered under the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA). In addition, the Committee will continue its oversight of the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, and its efforts to encourage the growth of defined benefit pension plans and provide timely and uninterrupted payments of pension benefits to American workers.

Elementary and Secondary Education: Following the enactment of the No Child Left Behind Act, in the 107th Congress, the Committee has been and will continue to be focused on the effective and timely implementation of the Act. The Committee will examine ongoing efforts to implement the law at the state and local level, as well as the obstacles to successful implementation at all levels, including how federal regulations promote or inhibit timely and effective implementation. Specific areas of focus will include accountability, assessments, choice, supplemental services, teacher quality, and flexibility. The Committee will also examine similar efforts to implement the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act, legislation signed by President Bush in December 2004 to align special education law with No Child Left Behind and provide new tools for parents, teachers and students with special needs.

Early Childhood Education: The Committee will conduct oversight of the use of federal Head Start funds and the various roles played by federal and local entities in the use of those funds, including the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The Committee will seek to address growing concerns that a significant share of the \$7 billion the federal government is currently investing in Head Start never reaches or benefits the children the money is intended to serve.

Department of Education: The Committee has been and will continue to be a vigorous advocate of financial accountability at the U.S. Department of Education. In November 2004, Secretary Paige said he had been notified that the Department was likely to receive its third consecutive "clean" annual audit by an outside "Big Six" accounting firm (prior to 2001, the Department had achieved just one such "clean" audit in its history). Potential problems and questions remain, however. The Committee expects financial accountability at the Department to further improve under the leadership of incoming Education Secretary Margaret Spellings, and will work during the 109th Congress to verify that this is the case.

Department of Labor: The Committee will continue its oversight of the various programs and statutes administered by the U.S. Department of Labor, including administration of the Occupational Safety and Health Act. The Committee also

expects to monitor and review the implementation of the Department of Labor's recent regulatory initiatives under the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 and the Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act of 1959, and the Department's administration of other workplace laws within its jurisdiction. In addition, the Committee will work to ensure that the Department of Labor's methods for collecting and disseminating employment data are consistent with the realities, needs, and challenges of today's workforce.

In addition to the above, the Committee reserves the right to review and investigate general legislative, administrative, and regulatory issues affecting the jurisdiction of the Committee.