

**Opening Statement of Chairman Robert C. “Bobby” Scott (VA-03)**

House Committee on Education and Labor

Full Committee Organizational Meeting for the 117<sup>th</sup> Congress

WebEx

Monday, February 8, 2021 | 4:00 p.m.

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I thank my colleagues for being here today. Before we begin, I would like to take a moment of silence to acknowledge the passing of a Member of our Committee, Rep. Wright of Texas. Regrettably, he battled COVID after surviving cancer – and has joined over 450,000 Americans who have succumbed to the disease. During this difficult time for so many in our communities, we need to do everything we can to make sure this doesn’t happen. I yield to the Ranking Member to see if she would like to say anything prior to the moment of silence.

As we formally begin our work for the 117<sup>th</sup> Congress, I want to express my commitment to working with every Member of this Committee to achieve the goals we share – ensuring that all people across this nation have access to quality education, good-paying jobs, and affordable health care.

We will not always agree on the path to achieving these goals, but I hope we will agree to work in good-faith and follow evidence and research in developing policies that will improve the lives of the people we serve. This Committee has the authority and responsibility to address many of the urgent issues facing our communities today.

First and foremost, we must do everything in our power to provide our children, students, educators, workers, and families with the relief to get through the COVID-19 pandemic. We have a duty improve the quality and lower the cost of our education system – from early childhood education to college and career. We also have a duty to help build back an economy that lifts hardworking families out of poverty and supports the middle class. And we have a duty to ensure access to affordable health care for people across the country, particularly those with preexisting conditions.

Finally, we have a responsibility to ensure that our laws are properly enacted and enforced. The Committee will conduct rigorous oversight to ensure that the departments, agencies, programs, and statutes under our jurisdiction are executed in an effective, efficient, and transparent manner as well as follow congressional intent in their scope, activities, and operations.

As our country continues to face unprecedented challenges, we must recognize that securing urgent relief for our communities, passing meaningful legislation, and conducting rigorous oversight will require us to work together.

As Chairman, I look forward to working with each and every one of you to find meaningful solutions for people across the country.

Now, I’d like to welcome and introduce the new majority Members of the Committee. The Committee’s Democratic Members reflect a broad cross-section of America. They include attorneys, educators, business owners, organizers, and local leaders who have served diverse communities across the country. Their expertise and experience will be invaluable for the Committee’s efforts to respond to the pandemic and ensure that everyone in this country can succeed.

Congresswoman Teresa Leger Fernandez represents New Mexico’s 3<sup>rd</sup> Congressional District. Before coming to Congress, she worked as an attorney and advocate and helped build schools, rural health clinics, broadband, businesses, affordable housing, and critical infrastructure for New Mexico.

Congressman Mondaire Jones represents New York's 17<sup>th</sup> Congressional District. Before coming to Congress, Mr. Jones worked as a litigator in private practice where he was honored by The Legal Aid Society of New York for his pro bono service investigating claims of employment discrimination and helping families defrauded during the Great Recession to recover funds.

Congresswoman Kathy Manning represents North Carolina's 6<sup>th</sup> Congressional District. Before coming to Congress, Ms. Manning worked to expand access to early childhood education, college scholarships, and workforce development through the United Way, University of North Carolina at Greensboro, and other nonprofit organizations.

Congressman Frank Mrvan represents Indiana's 1<sup>st</sup> Congressional District. Before coming to Congress, Mr. Mrvan served as the township trustee for North Township, Indiana for over 15 years.

Congressman Jamaal Bowman represents New York's 16<sup>th</sup> Congressional District. Before coming to Congress, Dr. Bowman founded and served as the former principal of the Cornerstone Academy for Social Action, a public middle school in Eastchester, Bronx.

Congressman Mark Pocan is a returning Committee member who has represented Wisconsin's 2<sup>nd</sup> congressional district since the 113<sup>th</sup> Congress. Before coming to Congress, Representative Pocan served in the Wisconsin State Assembly and has been a small business owner, union member, and long-time public servant.

Congresswoman Mikie Sherrill represents New Jersey's 11<sup>th</sup> District. Representative Sherrill previously served as an Assistant U.S. Attorney in New Jersey and spent almost 10 years on active duty in the United States Navy.

Congressman John Yarmuth is a returning Committee member who has represented Kentucky's 3<sup>rd</sup> congressional district since the 110<sup>th</sup> Congress. Representative Yarmuth previously led a successful career as a publisher and newspaper editor.

Congressman Adriano Espaillat is a returning Committee member who has represented New York's 13<sup>th</sup> congressional district since the 115<sup>th</sup> Congress. He is the first Dominican American to serve in the House and served in the New York State Senate before coming to Congress.

I will now yield to the distinguished Ranking Member of the Committee, the Gentlelady from North Carolina, Dr. Foxx, to make an opening statement and introduce the new Republican Members.