

Testimony of Rep. John Kline (R-MN)
Chairman, House Committee on Education and the Workforce
Committee on House Administration Hearing on the “Committee
Budget Request for the 114th Congress”
February 4, 2015

Chairman Miller, Ranking Member Brady, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear with my colleague Ranking Member Bobby Scott to testify about our committee budget request for the 114th Congress.

The Education and the Workforce Committee is once again presenting a responsible budget proposal that will allow us to fulfill our legislative and oversight responsibilities and continue to serve as good stewards of taxpayer dollars. For 2015 and 2016, we request that our funding levels remain at the current 2014 level.

No one questions the fiscal challenges our country faces, and we recognize we must all do our part. Our prudent use of taxpayer resources

these last few years demonstrates our commitment to ensuring each dollar we are allocated is spent efficiently and effectively.

However, I urge the committee to consider the very real challenges confronting our nation's schools and workplaces. The American people have entrusted us with a responsibility to help address these challenges, and to do so will require an appropriate amount of resources.

The Education and the Workforce Committee must advance a number of legislative priorities this Congress, including replacing *No Child Left Behind*, reauthorizing the *Higher Education Act*, reforming federal child nutrition programs, strengthening our juvenile justice system, and modernizing the multiemployer pension system.

There are a number of urgent opportunities to improve policies affecting students and working families; however, it is important to note that many of these priorities stem from laws that have or will expire in the very near future. We cannot afford to kick the can down the road any

longer.

In addition to our legislative duties, the committee will continue to conduct oversight of the executive branch. We will work to ensure the policies and programs enforced by the Departments of Education, Labor, Agriculture, and Health and Human Services – not to mention the various independent agencies under our jurisdiction – are administered responsibly and in line with congressional intent.

As we consider these legislative and oversight issues, we plan to host field hearings and site-visits. Over the years, we have convened field hearings to discuss with employers and workers in Indiana the health care challenges they are grappling with, to hear from education leaders in New York and Pennsylvania about the innovative efforts underway to better serve students, and to listen to men and women in Arizona and Nevada describe ways to improve career and technical training.

No matter how well intentioned we might be, it's all too easy to make decisions in the abstract. It is vital to see and hear first-hand about the challenges our schools and workplaces are facing, allowing us to make good decisions grounded in reality.

It is also important that we have sufficient staff with the knowledge and expertise to navigate very complicated policies. In previous years we have successfully kept our staffing levels lean. As we prepare to move forward with a robust agenda, it is clear we need additional staff to effectively conduct committee business.

We are offsetting these necessary expenses with spending cuts in other areas of our budget, allowing us to keep our funding needs flat. Rest assured, we will continue to do what's necessary to operate within our means and conduct the work the American people sent us here to do.

We respectfully ask the committee to take these factors into account as you consider our request to keep our budget at its 2014 funding level. Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I appreciate your time and would be happy to answer any questions.