

Committee on Energy and Commerce
Opening Statement as Prepared for Delivery
of
Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations Ranking Member Kathy Castor
Hearing on Oversight of Landmark Laws to Bolster Our Economy and Lower Prices
March 29, 2023

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you to our witnesses for being here.

I want to start by expressing my appreciation the Inspectors General, the GAO, all that you do to ensure agencies are implementing federal laws effectively and that they are allocating federal funds responsibly.

The IG and GAO responsibilities are essential, and they help inform our oversight work here in the Congress.

We are here today to review the implementation of three historic laws championed by Congressional Democrats and President Biden – the Inflation Reduction Act, the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law otherwise known as IIJA, and the CHIPS and Science Act.

These laws make vital investments in improving the lives of our neighbors; bringing good-paying jobs to our communities; putting money back in people’s pockets; and ensuring that we live up to our moral obligation to provide clean air, clean water, and a healthy planet for our children to inherit.

Back home in Tampa and St. Pete, my neighbors and small businesses already are benefiting from critical new investments to provide safer streets, clean up polluted superfund sites, reconnect communities, spur new needed housing, and train workers to take advantage of all of the new opportunities. And this is just the start.

As a longtime member of this Committee and former Chair of the Select Committee on the Climate Crisis, I am particularly proud of our work to address the escalating risks and costs driven by the climate crisis. We did a lot of great work to unleash American clean energy that is cheaper, to reduce pollution, and to ensure that it is American companies and American workers that are leading the way.

These landmark achievements will make tangible progress on some of our greatest challenges. We all should be rooting for their success and the agency experts administering them.

I regret that is not the tone from the majority. They have described these important programs as a frivolous “spending spree” to which I remind everyone that the Inflation Reduction Act was paid for and will actually decrease the deficit by approximately \$300 billion.

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Rather than helping our neighbors and all Americans benefit, some on the other side of the aisle seem to be hoping for the first minor misstep in order to declare these initiatives a failure.

I understand that most of our Republican House colleagues voted against these landmark laws. By and large, they voted against capping the cost of insulin for Medicare beneficiaries. They voted against repairing crumbling roads and bridges and expanding broadband access to rural communities. They voted against initiatives that will make the U.S. more competitive and less dependent on Chinese and other foreign manufacturers.

And they voted against the oversight mechanisms that are built into these new laws, including additional funding for relevant Offices of Inspectors General.

In fact, House Republicans are dedicating Congress' time this week to pass a bill that outright repeals major provisions of the Inflation Reduction Act that save our neighbors back home money at a time they really need it. The Polluters over People Act would roll back key clean energy investments and pave the way for polluters to rake in profits at the expense of the health of the American people.

Nevertheless, I hope that we can have a productive discussion today – oversight is very important to the success of these vital initiatives. And attention to the planning stages will ensure that these landmark laws deliver as we intended. I look forward to hearing from today's witnesses and our work ahead.