



# U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations

*PRESS RELEASE*

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## **Statement of Senator Harkin at Labor-HHS, Education Subcommittee Markup**

### **Statement of Chairman Tom Harkin (D-IA)**

At the Labor, Health and Human Services And Education Appropriations Subcommittee Markup

*\*As Prepared for Delivery\**

WASHINGTON, D.C.- Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA) delivered the following opening remarks at the Appropriations Subcommittee Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education and Related Agencies markup today:

"The Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education and Related Agencies will come to order.

"We are convened, today, to mark up the fiscal year 2012 appropriations bill. This will be the only Labor-HHS bill marked up for this fiscal year. The House Labor-HHS subcommittee was scheduled to consider a bill two weeks ago, but the majority couldn't muster enough votes to pass it, and has abandoned all attempts to do so.

"Certainly, this was a difficult bill to write. Last year's appropriations bill eliminated 46 programs totaling more than \$1.3 billion. It cut all the fat and went into bone. In this bill, we get into the marrow. Our 302(b) allocation is \$308 million less than last year. As a result, the bill before us zeroes out another 15 programs totaling more than \$230 million and reduces funding for dozens of others.

"Some of these cuts will be painful and unpopular. But I believe this bill still preserves this subcommittee's top priority: that every American deserves the right to a good education and job skills training; protection from illness and want; and an equal opportunity to reach one's highest potential.

"The bill includes three main goals. The first is eliminating fraud, waste and abuse. The bill includes \$581 million for Health Care Fraud and Abuse Control activities at the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services - almost double the amount from last year. We know that every dollar we spend on combating fraud and abuse in Medicare and Medicaid generates \$6 in savings, so this investment is a great deal for taxpayers.

"The second goal is to use the funds at our disposal more wisely. In lean times, innovation and reform make every dollar stretch further. This bill includes several initiatives that will leverage systemic changes in the areas of education, labor and medical research. They include:

- Race to the Top, the administration's education reform program;
- The Workforce Innovation Fund, which will help reform the way we train workers in this country;
- And the creation of a new center at NIH, the National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences, which will be dedicated to translating basic biomedical research into cures.
- The third goal is to help ensure that our young people have the quality education they need to get good jobs and compete in a global economy.

"To that end, the bill:

- Provides enough funding to maintain the maximum Pell Grant award level at \$5,550;
- Preserves the number of children served by Head Start; and
- Doubles funding for the Promise Neighborhoods program.

"Finally, the bill includes additional funding to implement health care reform. I say this with special pride. The Affordable Care Act will improve the lives of tens of millions of Americans and begin to transform our current 'sick care' system into a true health care system, one that is more focused on wellness, prevention, and public health. Health reform will also save money - hundreds of billions in the first decade and more than \$1 trillion in the second decade. So I am proud to include funding for health care reform in this bill. Once again, this is a good deal for taxpayers.

"In summary, I think it's a good bill, given our budget constraints, and I urge all members tomorrow to vote to report it out of committee.

"I yield to Senator Shelby for any comments he would like to make."

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