

House Republicans Advance Bill With Labor, Health Spending Cuts

By Alex Ruoff, Diego Areas Munhoz and Kellie Lunney 2024-06-27T09:01:31000-04:00

House Republicans Thursday advanced a bill that would slash billions of dollars from health care and social programs and cut funding for agencies responsible for enforcing worker protection laws.

The House Appropriations Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Subcommittee approved its [fiscal 2025 spending bill](#) by a voice vote. The \$185.8 billion Labor-HHS-Education measure amounts to 11% below current effective funding levels.

Democrats voiced their opposition to the bill. Rep. Rosa DeLauro (Conn.), the top Democrat on the Appropriations Committee, said Democrats would “accept nothing less than” a 1% increase to the L-HHS bill.

Rep. Tom Cole (R-Okla.), chair of the committee, called the proposal “a start” and said various spending bills would change to get Democratic support in the Senate.

This spending bill—which touches a broad array of programs, from the nation’s biomedical research agencies to the enforcement of labor laws—has historically been a challenge for Republicans to pass if it includes cuts to key programs that Democrats support.

[House Republicans Propose Deep Cuts for Health, Labor Agencies](#)

This package includes a \$8.5 billion—or 7%—cut for the Department of Health and Human Services in the next fiscal year compared with current spending, and a 23% reduction for the Labor Department.

In addition to drastically shrinking agency funding, Republican appropriators added policy riders to block Labor Department rulemaking on employee classification, the overtime pay threshold and investment fiduciaries. They also seek to undo the department’s proposed revamp of the US apprenticeship system.

The plan would also prevent fiscal 2025 funds from being spent to create tougher federal standards on coal miners' exposure to a toxic mineral linked to lung disease. The appropriations legislation effectively would block the Biden administration's April rule to mandate a lower legal limit for safe exposure to crystalline silica.

The mineral is found in construction materials such as concrete, brick, and stone and has been linked to cancer and other respiratory diseases.

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