

WASHINGTON, DC – Congressman Robert C. "Bobby" Scott (D-VA-03), a member of the Committee on Education and the Workforce, issued the following statement on his No vote on H.J.Res. 118, a resolution that would overturn the Obama Administration proposal to provide states with flexibility to move more Americans from welfare to work:

"Today I voted against a Republican, partisan resolution to overturn an Obama administration proposal providing states flexibility to move more Americans from welfare to work.

"Let's be clear about what this proposal does. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services recently offered a waiver to states to give them flexibility to the work requirement only if that flexibility results in increasing the success of getting people to work. In doing so, HHS is not waiving the work requirement; rather, it is giving states the flexibility to surpass the results achieved under existing work requirements.

"The Republicans have attempted to use this waiver as a political scheme to suggest that Democrats are not concerned about helping American families get back on their feet. They offered a resolution expressing congressional disapproval of the waivers and attempting to prevent the waivers from being implemented.

"The hypocrisy is apparent. If you want to talk about efforts to actually undermine work requirements, it is important to note that Republicans have repeatedly voted for a broader waiver authority of work participation standards in the past, which in fact dilute the work requirements. According to a September 6, 2012 Congressional Research report, "the Administration of President George W. Bush made a legislative proposal to create new 'superwaiver' authority that would, among other things, have allowed for the waiver of the federal TANF work participation standards. That proposal passed the House three times between 2002 and 2005." The legislation passed by the Republican-controlled House in those three instances and that allowed for a much broader waiver of federal TANF work participation standards are:

"1. H.R. 4737 (107th Congress), Section 701, which passed the House on May 16, 2002 with 214 Republican votes (Roll Call Vote #170)

"2. H.R. 4 (108th Congress), Section 601, passed the House on February 13, 2003 with 219 Republican votes (Roll Call Vote #30)

"3. H.R. 4241 (109th Congress), Section 8601, passed the House on November 18, 2005 with 217 Republican votes. (Roll Call Vote #601)

"In 2005, the broader waiver was supported by 29 Republican Governors, including then-Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney.

"And this Congress, on June 7, 2012, the Republicans on the Committee on Education and the Workforce unanimously voted in favor of another waiver, included in H.R. 4297 that would permit TANF money to be spent in the WIA program without carrying over any work requirements, thereby allowing a complete elimination of any work requirements.

"Thus, the Obama administration did not dilute the work requirements, but on three occasions Republican-led Congresses did vote to dilute the work requirements, and earlier this year Republicans on the Committee on Education and the Workforce unanimously voted to allow an elimination of the work requirements altogether.

"Moreover, the Secretary's authority to offer states the option to apply for such a waiver is expressly granted within statutory law, under TANF Section 1115.

"The current HHS waiver is narrower than these Republican waiver proposals, and has greater potential for achieving improved employment outcomes.

"For these reasons, I opposed the resolution."

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