

# Congress of the United States

## House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

2157 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6143

MAJORITY (202) 225-5074  
MINORITY (202) 225-5051  
<http://oversight.house.gov>

### Opening Statement Ranking Member Elijah E. Cummings

### H.R. 3231, the Federal Intern Protection Act

October 9, 2015

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you very much for bringing H.R. 3231 before the Committee for consideration.

Unpaid interns work in federal agencies every day. They do this work to acquire experience and contacts to help them pursue their career dreams, which, hopefully, include working for the federal government!

The federal workers from whom unpaid interns are learning are protected from discrimination and sexual harassment by federal law.

Unfortunately, due to a loophole in existing law, unpaid interns are not protected from discrimination and sexual harassment.

This Committee has held a number of oversight hearings on employee misconduct. In some instances, the misconduct involved the sexual harassment of interns.

Witness testimony has included allegations of unwanted touching and uninvited sexual advances.

Mr. Chairman, having heard that testimony, now is the time to make reforms.

My bill, H.R. 3231, would include interns under existing protections, making it illegal to discriminate against interns on the basis of religion, race, and gender, just as it is currently illegal to discriminate against or harass other workers in the federal government on these bases.

We are not creating new policy. We are simply closing a loophole in an existing one.

I am glad we were able to come together today to support the Federal Intern Protection Act. And I want to thank you, Mr. Chairman, for working with me in a bipartisan way on this bill.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

---

Contact: Jennifer Werner, Communications Director, (202) 226-5181.