



# INSTITUTE for the American Worker

## Democrats' Proposed Labor Funding Increases Fall Nearly Flat

After months of delay, Congress finally approved federal funding legislation for fiscal year 2022. Democrats in both chambers, as well as the White House, initially sought massive funding increases for federal labor agencies and programs but Republicans objected.

The senior Republican member of the House Labor Appropriations subcommittee, Rep. Tom Cole (R-OK), [said](#) simply when rejecting the House Democrats proposal, **“The price tag is too high.”**

Rep. Virginia Foxx (R-NC) joined Cole in that effort, [calling](#) the bill a **“bloated behemoth”** and **“a scheme to rig union elections.”**

The final [package](#), after bipartisan and bicameral negotiations, includes just moderate funding increases for these programs or, as in the case of the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), no increase at all.

A case in point is the Department of Labor's (DOL) Wage and Hour Division. The White House budget proposal called for a 12.4% funding increase and described this funding as needed to crack down on businesses “misclassifying employees as independent contractors”. Their stated purpose is in line with other steps the administration has pursued to stifle independent contracting and the gig economy, such as the nomination of [David Weil](#) to serve as the Wage and Hour Division administrator. *The Wall Street Journal* described Weil as “a life-long, left-wing academic with labor-union sympathies, no private-sector experience or legal training, and limited management experience.” House Democrats proposed to go further and sought a nearly 22% increase for Wage and Hour. **The final appropriation for Wage and Hour, just approved by Congress, came in at a 2% funding increase.**

- That pattern continued for OSHA, which received a 3.4% funding increase after a 16.9% increase was sought in the House Democrats' bill.
- The Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs got a 2.4% increase after House Democrats pursued a 32.8% increase.
- DOL's Office of Labor Management Standards (OSHA) and Employee Benefit Security Administration (EBSA) as well as the independent National Mediation Board (NMB) all received increases around 3% rather than the more significant increases sought by some in the majority on the Hill.

**Funding for the NLRB was flat-lined at the same amount as the past two fiscal years, despite the White House budget and Senate Democrats proposing a 10% funding increase for NLRB.** House Democrats had called for a 15% increase as well as earmarked funding to establish electronic voting in union elections, a practice long-since prohibited by this annual

congressional legislation. In the end Congress once again approved a prohibition on NLRB electronic voting and no funds were earmarked for the creation of such a system.

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