

Rep. Grothman: Holds DOL Secretary accountable for department efficiency

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(Washington, D.C.) – Congressman Glenn Grothman (R-Glenbeulah) today questioned Department of Labor Secretary Alexander Acosta on the policies and priorities of the U.S. Department of Labor during a House Committee on Education and the Workforce hearing.

Excerpts of Grothman’s questioning

Congressman Grothman: “Thank you very much. How many employees do you have over at the Department of Labor?”

Secretary Acosta: “Congressman, I believe we have about 15,000, give or take.”

Congressman Grothman: “And how many do you get to hire?”

Secretary Acosta: “Very few, Congressman. I don’t have an exact number.”

Congressman Grothman: “Less than 20? Less than 30?”

Secretary Acosta: “More than 30 but less than 100 I would say.”

Congressman Grothman: “With regard to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), right now there have been some complaints in my district of people who come in and write citations for relatively minor things, sometimes sending out public press releases as far as minor things that may be easily

correctable. Do you have any plans to try to do something to kind of reign in OSHA? Are you aware of that problem?

Secretary Acosta: “My perspective on OSHA enforcement, and enforcement in general, is where you have individuals that are trying to do the right thing, that are trying to comply, there is a value to compliance assistance, to saying ‘this is how it needs to be done’. On the flip side, if you have an employer that is engaged in repeated and willful violations, violations that have resulted in serious harm, we need to be very aggressive in the enforcement. So, I think compliance assistance goes hand-in-hand with aggressive enforcement.”

Congressman Grothman: “I think maybe the number one problem for employers in my district is they can’t find people to work. I can think of a couple things we could do about that. For one thing, of course, we still have a large government bureaucracy. Do you feel that you need all the people who are working for you right now? Are you looking into areas of efficiencies? At least in your little bailiwick you can maybe decrease the employment and open up some of your folks for work in the private sector.

Secretary Acosta: “There’s always room to improve efficiencies. What we’re looking at right now and where we’re focused it particularly on the programmatic dollars because that’s by far where most of our spending is and in how we can spend those dollars wisely to focus on outcomes. As I said earlier it’s not simply, and particularly in the workforce education side, how many folks are receiving services, but what is the outcome. How many graduates and how many jobs.”

Congressman Grothman: “To a degree your organization deals with something I’ll refer to as welfare or help for people. Right now we have a lot of perverse incentives in our society. Could you comment on if you feel you have any role in dealing with our income transfer payments? As President Trump has said he wants to take this up next year, could you give us any role that you might play in this?

Secretary Acosta: “Obviously we will be playing a significant role. Particularly when it comes to workforce issues this is an important factor. And as the President has said, this will be an issue for next year.”

Click [here](#) to view Grothman’s full remarks (Congressman Grothman’s remarks begin at 2:11:31).

Background

“The Department of Labor is on the frontline of the issues facing America’s workers and job creators, and sets policies that have a widespread impact on the economy, employment, retirement security, and more. It is a key responsibility of this committee to conduct oversight of this important department, and we look forward to hearing Secretary Acosta testify for the first time since his confirmation.”-
Chairwoman Virginia Foxx (R-NC)