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**United States Senate**  
COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING, AND  
URBAN AFFAIRS  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6075

May 7, 2025

The Honorable Linda McMahon  
Secretary of Education  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20202

Dear Secretary McMahon:

I invite you to appear at a spotlight forum entitled “Stealing the American Dream: How Trump and Republicans Are Raising Education Costs for Families.” The forum is scheduled to take place at 2:30 p.m. on Wednesday, May 14, 2025, at the Dirksen Senate Office Building in Room G11.

This forum will examine how both the Trump administration’s attacks on the Department of Education (ED) and Congressional Republicans’ legislative plans will increase education costs and limit access to higher education for America’s students.

The Trump administration is dismantling the Department of Education. ED is responsible for delivering financial aid to students and families, including through the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and the administration of Pell Grants and federal student loans.<sup>1</sup> The agency is also responsible for protecting students and borrowers from bad actors such as poorly performing student loan servicers and unscrupulous for-profit colleges.<sup>2</sup> However, the Trump administration has abdicated these responsibilities, firing roughly half of the agency’s workforce in March, with the FAFSA shutting down for hours in the immediate aftermath.<sup>3</sup> Additionally, President Trump has signed an executive order seeking to abolish the Department of Education and announced his intent to outsource student loan management to the Small Business

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<sup>1</sup> Office of Federal Student Aid, U.S. Department of Education, “About Us,” <https://studentaid.gov/about>; Office of Federal Student Aid, U.S. Department of Education, “Types of Financial Aid: Grants, Work-Study, and Loans,” <https://studentaid.gov/understand-aid/types>.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Department of Education, “U.S. Department of Education Initiates Reduction in Force,” press release, March 11, 2025, <https://www.ed.gov/about/news/press-release/us-department-of-education-initiates-reduction-force>; AP News, “Federal student loan site down Wednesday, a day after layoffs gutted Education Department,” Collin Binkley and Jocelyn Gecker, March 13, 2025, <https://apnews.com/article/student-loans-education-department-outage-layoffs-5afb5a0a1b51bbe50e5961a63b419041>.

Administration, an agency that has already had its staff slashed and is ill-equipped to handle the extraordinarily complex student loan system.<sup>4</sup>

At the same time, Republicans in Congress are advancing legislation to make higher education significantly more expensive for American families, all to pay for tax cuts for the ultra-wealthy. On April 29, 2025, the House Education and Workforce Committee approved legislation that would slash an estimated \$351 billion from programs that lower the cost of education for working families.<sup>5</sup> This legislation would hike monthly student loan payments for borrowers, extend repayment windows from 20 years to 30 years, restrict access to Pell Grants, end key accountability measures for for-profit colleges, and make it harder for victims of educational scams to get relief on their student loans.<sup>6</sup> These changes will make education less affordable and accessible for students from working families, single moms who hope to advance their careers, veterans and other public servants, and anyone who does not have the money or ability to pay out of pocket to attend school.<sup>7</sup>

Your appearance will provide you with an opportunity to defend the Trump administration's policies, offer context for your actions to dismantle the Department of Education, and share your vision for ensuring that the American Dream becomes more attainable for all.

Thank you in advance for your participation.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth Warren  
Ranking Member  
Senate Committee on Banking,  
Housing, and Urban Affairs

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<sup>4</sup> Executive Order 14242, "Improving Education Outcomes by Empowering Parents, States, and Communities," March 20, 2025, <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/03/25/2025-05213/improving-education-outcomes-by-empowering-parents-states-and-communities>; Inside Higher Ed, "Trump's Plan to Move Student Loans to SBA Raises Concerns," Katherine Knott, March 21, 2025, <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/government/student-aid-policy/2025/03/21/small-business-administration-take-over-student-loans>.

<sup>5</sup> Politico, "House committee votes to overhaul student aid programs," Mackenzie Wilkes, April 29, 2025, <https://www.politico.com/live-updates/2025/04/29/congress/gop-votes-to-overhaul-student-aid-programs-00317620>

<sup>6</sup> American Prospect, "Republicans Opt to Make Education an Upper-Class Privilege," David Dayen, April 30, 2025, <https://prospect.org/education/2025-04-30-republicans-education-upper-class-privilege-student-loans>.

<sup>7</sup> *Id.*