

August 6, 2025

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

Dear Secretary McMahon:

Since the Trump Administration took office, my office and the Department of Education (ED or the Department) have exchanged several letters regarding the Department's relentless war on students and your dismantling of its education programs. On June 10, 2025, we met to discuss these issues in person, and you promised to provide complete responses to over 60 written questions about ED's mass firings, changes to student loan repayment, oversight of loan servicers, and more.

Despite our vast differences of opinion on education policy, I appreciated several key commitments you made in our June meeting. You admitted to me that you would need Congressional approval before moving the statutory responsibilities of ED to other agencies and that you had no legal authority to do so unilaterally.¹ You committed not to offset the Social Security payments of elderly or disabled student loan borrowers who default on their loans and asserted that you personally stepped in to block this senseless policy from going into effect.² And finally, you told me that you would soon restore the income-driven repayment (IDR) payment tracker—which ED took down in April 2025³—to the Federal Student Aid (FSA) website, allowing borrowers to reliably track their progress towards debt relief.⁴

However, your latest letter dated July 21—a response to the oversight letter I sent in advance of our June meeting—was severely lacking. In your response, you largely stuck to talking points and vague platitudes. You appear to have cherry-picked much of the data you did provide, indicating that ED is hiding information from Congress when that data is inconvenient for its preferred

¹ Office of Senator Elizabeth Warren, "McMahon Admits to Warren That Education Secretary Lacks Legal Authority to Dismantle the Education Department," press release, June 10, 2025, <https://www.warren.senate.gov/newsroom/press-releases/mcmahon-admits-to-warren-that-education-secretary-lacks-legal-authority-to-dismantle-the-education-department>.

² *Id.*

³ Student Loan Borrower Assistance, "Screenshot Your IDR Progress Today," April 25, 2025, <https://studentloanborrowerassistance.org/screenshot-your-idr-progress-today/>.

⁴ Office of Senator Elizabeth Warren, "McMahon Admits to Warren That Education Secretary Lacks Legal Authority to Dismantle the Education Department," press release, June 10, 2025, <https://www.warren.senate.gov/newsroom/press-releases/mcmahon-admits-to-warren-that-education-secretary-lacks-legal-authority-to-dismantle-the-education-department>.

narratives. And while your response contained some new information and concessions about the Department's programs, that is not enough.

Finally, there are certain topics that ED has now repeatedly refused to disclose critical information on in response to multiple oversight investigations, including its decision-making processes surrounding the March 11 Reduction In Force (RIF) and safeguards pertaining to ED's generative AI customer service chatbot.⁵ I will be referring these matters to the ED Office of Inspector General and Government Accountability Office in the coming weeks. In this letter, however, I have highlighted and asked additional questions about other areas that demand further clarity from ED.

New Findings and Concessions in ED's July 21, 2025 Letter

Some information contained in your response letter was new or noteworthy. For example, you disclosed that the staff of ED's Office of the Ombudsman currently have a backlog of over 27,000 complaints from students and student loan borrowers, while a mere 1,122 complaints were closed during May 2025.⁶ It is unclear how many of those closed complaints were successfully resolved by ED. If the Ombudsman's Office continues to receive complaints at the rate at which it did between mid-March and late June of this year, the backlog will continue to grow by hundreds of complaints per month if ED does not begin resolving complaints significantly faster than it did in May.⁷

You also disclosed that ED will be moving some of the Missouri Higher Education Loan Authority's (MOHELA's) federal student loan portfolio to other servicers later this year, a process that the Biden Administration set into motion given MOHELA's abysmal performance.⁸ You admitted that you were doing so to improve MOHELA's performance,⁹ and I appreciate your acknowledgement and action—to my knowledge, the first such admission from the Trump Administration—in response to MOHELA's failures to adequately serve borrowers.

Your letter also appears to rule out¹⁰ cutting ED's loan servicing budget by 60 percent, as DOGE reportedly recommended several months ago.¹¹ And finally, you admitted that federal loan servicers are "contractually required" to regularly communicate with borrowers about overdue payments.¹²

⁵ On file with the Office of Senator Elizabeth Warren.

⁶ Letter from ED Acting Assistant Secretary Sarah Ursprung to Senator Elizabeth Warren, July 21, 2025, p. 10, https://www.warren.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/dept_of_ed_responds_to_senator_warren_tmv5uf85r1vy.pdf.

⁷ *Id.*; Calculations on file with the Office of Senator Elizabeth Warren.

⁸ Letter from ED Acting Assistant Secretary Sarah Ursprung to Senator Elizabeth Warren, July 21, 2025, pp. 3-4, https://www.warren.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/dept_of_ed_responds_to_senator_warren_tmv5uf85r1vy.pdf.

⁹ *Id.*

¹⁰ *Id.*, p. 7.

¹¹ Office of U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren, "At Senate Spotlight Forum, Warren, Senators Rip McMahon's Cuts to Education Department and Trump's 'Big, Beautiful Bill,'" press release, May 14, 2025, <https://www.warren.senate.gov/newsroom/press-releases/at-senate-spotlight-forum-warren-senators-rip-mcmahons-cuts-to-education-department-and-trumps-big-beautiful-bill>.

¹² Letter from ED Acting Assistant Secretary Sarah Ursprung to Senator Elizabeth Warren, July 21, 2025, p. 2, https://www.warren.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/dept_of_ed_responds_to_senator_warren_tmv5uf85r1vy.pdf.

Outstanding Information Needed from the Department of Education

Unfortunately, your letter contained more omissions and evasive rhetoric than concrete information. For example, your response regarding FSA's IDR payment counter was disappointingly vague. Before ED removed it from FSA's website in April 2025, the IDR payment counter was a critical resource set up by the Biden Administration that allowed borrowers to track their progress towards debt relief under Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) or IDR.¹³ In addition to helping borrowers financially plan and make informed decisions regarding loan repayment,¹⁴ the payment counter made it possible for borrowers to see which of their payments had been counted towards debt relief. This made it possible for them to hold servicers and FSA accountable if there were discrepancies suggesting they were unlawfully denied relief due to servicer errors or mismanaged application backlogs.

During our June 10 meeting, you committed to restoring the payment counter and told me you would provide more information about when ED would do so.¹⁵ You also committed to disclosing whether the counter would be restored on a rolling basis for different borrowers or all at once.¹⁶ However, your letter neglects to provide this information; it merely states that "FSA is working with loan servicers to develop a solution" to correctly display IDR payment counts and that the Eighth Circuit's injunction "places certain limitations" on this work.¹⁷ Yet, you did not explain how long this would take, what those limitations are, or how the restoration of IDR payment counts would be rolled out.

- 1) When, specifically, do you expect to make IDR payment counts available to borrowers? If there is uncertainty, please provide your best estimate.
- 2) Do you expect to restore the payment counts on a rolling basis or for all borrowers at once? If on a rolling basis, how many borrowers will see restored payment counts during each rollout and on what timetable?
- 3) How will ED ensure that the new payment counts are accurate? Will borrowers have access to the data underlying the payment counts (e.g., a complete list of the eligible payments they have made), as they did previously?
- 4) In ED's view, what "limitations" does the Eighth Circuit's injunction pose on displaying IDR payment counts?

¹³ Forbes, "Department Of Education Removes New Student Loan Forgiveness Tracker For Some Borrowers," Adam S. Minsky, April 28, 2025, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/adamminsky/2025/04/28/departement-of-education-removes-new-student-loan-forgiveness-tracker-for-some-borrowers/>.

¹⁴ *Id.*

¹⁵ Office of Senator Elizabeth Warren, "McMahon Admits to Warren That Education Secretary Lacks Legal Authority to Dismantle the Education Department," press release, June 10, 2025, <https://www.warren.senate.gov/newsroom/press-releases/mcmahon-admits-to-warren-that-education-secretary-lacks-legal-authority-to-dismantle-the-education-department>.

¹⁶ On file with the Office of Senator Elizabeth Warren.

¹⁷ Letter from ED Acting Assistant Secretary Sarah Ursprung to Senator Elizabeth Warren, July 21, 2025, p. 3, https://www.warren.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/dept_of_ed_responds_to_senator_warren_tmv5uf85r1vy.pdf.

Your letter also provides inadequate detail on how ED is addressing the IDR backlog, which is preventing nearly 1.5 million borrowers from entering repayment plans and making progress towards PSLF or IDR debt relief.¹⁸ In describing your plans to fix the backlog, you wrote that you are “working closely with...loan servicers to ensure IDR applications are being processed in a timely manner,”¹⁹ an extraordinarily vague comment especially given the high stakes of this issue for over a million borrowers.

- 5) What do you consider to be a “timely manner” in which to process IDR applications?
 - a. What quantifiable goals do you have regarding the clearing of the IDR backlog and the speed at which IDR applications should be processed?
 - b. When do you expect the backlog to be fully cleared?
 - c. If FSA itself or a government watchdog such as GAO determines that FSA’s reduced staffing since the RIF is impeding FSA’s ability to clear backlogs in a “timely manner,” will ED hire additional staff at FSA to help clear backlogs more quickly?
- 6) How, exactly, are you working with loan servicers to clear backlogs?
 - a. Under what circumstances, if any, would you penalize servicers if they fail to clear backlogs in a timely manner? If you would penalize servicers, how would you do so?
 - b. What other incentives, if any, are you utilizing to induce servicers to efficiently clear backlogs?
- 7) Currently, what is the average time gap between the submission of a successful IDR application and the borrower being placed in an IDR plan?
- 8) Of the IDR applications processed since January 2025, please provide a breakdown of processed applications’ status by month. How many were approved? How many were denied? To the maximum extent possible, please categorize the reason for denial (e.g., incomplete application, ineligible for plan selected).

Your letter also raises questions about access to debt relief for the many borrowers who become eligible each year through PSLF or IDR. Specifically, it claims that ED can “only cancel loan balances in certain limited circumstances” and calls debt cancellation a “false promise.”²⁰ This dismissive rhetoric provokes concerns that you may fail to provide debt relief to borrowers in accordance with existing regulations and laws, despite your commitment to “to follow the law [and] regulations.”²¹

- 9) In ED’s view, do the so-called “limited circumstances”²² in which ED is obligated to cancel loan balances encompass each of the following:

¹⁸ *Id.*, p. 3.

¹⁹ *Id.*

²⁰ *Id.*, p. 1.

²¹ *Id.*, p. 8.

²² *Id.*

- a) Debt relief after making monthly IDR payments for twenty or twenty-five years (as relevant to the borrower's chosen plan)?
 - b) Public Service Loan Forgiveness?
 - c) Total and Permanent Disability discharge?
 - d) Closed School Discharge?
 - e) Borrower Defense to Repayment?
- 10) Since January 20th, 2025, how many borrowers have received each type of the following forms of debt relief? How many borrowers have been approved and how many have been denied for each? What have been the most common denial reasons for each?
- a) Debt relief after making monthly payments in Income-Based Repayment for twenty or twenty-five years (as relevant to the borrowers' terms under the plan)?
 - b) Public Service Loan Forgiveness?
 - c) Total and Permanent Disability discharge?
 - d) Closed School Discharge?
 - e) Borrower Defense to Repayment?
- 11) In your letter, you cited the number of PSLF buyback applications processed in May 2025.²³ How many PSLF buyback applications have been *approved* since January 20th, 2025? How many have been approved since March 11, 2025?

In addition, I have further questions regarding borrower delinquencies and defaults, which can block borrowers from accessing affordable mortgages, auto loans, or other forms of credit.²⁴ It is especially critical to understand the current data on defaults and delinquencies given the ongoing “default cliff” in which nearly five million borrowers are projected to default on their loans between July 2025 and September 2025.²⁵ In your letter, you shared that the number of delinquent borrowers has decreased and that the share of borrowers who are current on their loans increased by three percent in May 2025.²⁶

- 12) What was the total number of delinquent borrowers during each month since January 2025? Please specify this number by loan type (e.g., subsidized, unsubsidized undergraduate, unsubsidized graduate, Grad PLUS, and Parent PLUS).
- 13) Your letter disclosed the number of borrowers currently in default: 5.6 million,²⁷ which is worryingly high. However, you failed to disclose the number of borrowers in default who

²³ *Id.*

²⁴ Federal Reserve Bank of New York, “Student Loan Delinquencies Are Back, and Credit Scores Take a Tumble,” Andrew F. Haughwout, Donghoon Lee, Daniel Mangrum, Joelle Scally, and Wilbert van der Klaauw, May 13, 2025, <https://libertystreeteconomics.newyorkfed.org/2025/05/student-loan-delinquencies-are-back-and-credit-scores-take-a-tumble/>.

²⁵ TransUnion, “Following the Resumption of Federal Collection Activities in May, Nearly One in Three Federal Student Loan Borrowers Find Themselves at Risk for Default,” June 24, 2025, <https://newsroom.transunion.com/june-2025-student-loan-update/>.

²⁶ Letter from ED Acting Assistant Secretary Sarah Ursprung to Senator Elizabeth Warren, July 21, 2025, p. 2, https://www.warren.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/dept_of_ed_responds_to_senator_warren_tmv5uf85rlvy.pdf.

²⁷ *Id.*, p. 2.

have begun the rehabilitation or consolidation process to leave default. What was that number for each of the past three months?

- 14) How many borrowers does ED expect to default on their loans in each of the next three months?

In a troubling lack of transparency, your letter withholds data on the distribution of firings across ED's offices that occurred during the RIF. You claim to be unable to provide this information due to ongoing litigation, but you did not explain why the litigation prevents you from doing so or why it allows you to provide data on the distribution of deferred resignations but not on the distribution of firings. Given the impacts of the RIF on ED's ability to carry out essential functions that support students, families, and borrowers,²⁸ it is critical that you make this information publicly available.

- 15) How many individuals were employed before March 11 in the following offices? How many individuals are employed in these offices as of August 2025?

- a) Office of the Ombudsman
- b) Partner Enforcement and Consumer Protection Directorate, and each of its five composite groups
- c) Partner Eligibility and Oversight Services Directorate, and each of its three composite groups
- d) Program Delivery Services Group, and each of its three composite divisions
- e) Partner Systems Integration Division
- f) Vendor and Program Oversight Group
- g) Operational Improvement and Oversight Directorate

- 16) If you continue to assert that ongoing litigation prevents ED from disclosing this data:

- a) Please explain exactly why you believe that ongoing litigation prevents you from doing so.
- b) Please explain why you were able to provide data on the number of deferred resignations in each office but not on the number of firings in each office.

During our meeting in June, you told me that you could not move statutory functions of ED to other agencies without Congressional approval.²⁹ However, your letter only states that "this Administration will continue to perform all statutory duties while empowering families and teachers"—without confirming whether it is ED who will be performing those duties—and then claims that ongoing litigation prevents you from further commenting on the extent to which ED

²⁸ U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren, "After Supreme Court Greenlights Mass Layoffs at ED, New Warren Report Reveals Impact of Trump Administration's Attacks On Public Education," July 17, 2025, <https://www.warren.senate.gov/newsroom/press-releases/after-supreme-court-greenlights-mass-layoffs-at-ed-new-warren-report-reveals-impact-of-trump-administrations-attacks-on-public-education>.

²⁹ Office of Senator Elizabeth Warren, "McMahon Admits to Warren That Education Secretary Lacks Legal Authority to Dismantle the Education Department," press release, June 10, 2025, <https://www.warren.senate.gov/newsroom/press-releases/mcmahon-admits-to-warren-that-education-secretary-lacks-legal-authority-to-dismantle-the-education-department>.

has taken any steps towards moving its responsibilities to other agencies.³⁰ Your obfuscation is especially concerning given ED's recent move to begin partially outsourcing workforce training program administration to the Department of Labor and its prior efforts to move the federal student loan portfolio to the Department of the Treasury.³¹

- 17) Please describe all steps that ED has taken to move any of the Department's functions—including, but not limited to, the management of the federal student loan portfolio and the enforcement of protections for students with disabilities—outside of the Department. If ED has indeed taken steps to move its statutory functions outside of the Department, how are those actions consistent with the statements you made to me in our June meeting?
- 18) If you continue to claim that you cannot answer questions on this topic due to ongoing litigation, why, specifically, does the litigation prevent you from doing so?
- 19) Does your statement that “this Administration will continue to perform all statutory duties while empowering families and teachers”³² mean that it is ED who will perform those statutory duties or that other agencies within the Administration will do so?

Your letter also raises further questions on the performance of federal student loan servicers. I am glad you admit that servicers are “contractually required”³³ to regularly communicate with borrowers regarding overdue payments. However, servicers have a lengthy track record of egregious errors and misconduct that result in grave financial harms to borrowers, including, but not limited to, poor or misleading communication.³⁴

- 20) What specific contractual requirements do you understand servicers to have regarding frequency of communication with borrowers in delinquency or default? Please provide specific examples from their contracts.
- 21) How are you enforcing these obligations or ensuring that servicers will follow them, given their records of poor customer service?

³⁰ Letter from ED Acting Assistant Secretary Sarah Ursprung to Senator Elizabeth Warren, July 21, 2025, p. 5, https://www.warren.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/dept_of_ed_responds_to_senator_warren_tmv5uf85r1vy.pdf.

³¹ The New York Times, “What’s Next for Trump’s Plans to Dismantle the Education Department,” Michael C. Bender, July 15, 2025, <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/07/15/us/politics/trump-education-department-next-steps.html>.

³² Letter from ED Acting Assistant Secretary Sarah Ursprung to Senator Elizabeth Warren, July 21, 2025, p. 5, https://www.warren.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/dept_of_ed_responds_to_senator_warren_tmv5uf85r1vy.pdf.

³³ *Id.*, p.2.

³⁴ Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, “CFPB Uncovers Illegal Practices Across Student Loan Refinancing, Servicing, and Debt Collection,” press release, December 16, 2024, <https://www.consumerfinance.gov/about-us/newsroom/cfpb-uncovers-illegal-practices-across-student-loan-refinancing-servicing-and-debt-collection/>; Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, “CFPB Steps Up Scrutiny of Student Loan Servicers That Deceive Borrowers About Public Service Loan Forgiveness,” press release, February 18, 2022, <https://www.consumerfinance.gov/about-us/newsroom/cfpb-steps-up-scrutiny-of-student-loan-servicers-who-deceive-borrowers-about-public-service-loan-forgiveness/>.

- 22) Your letter stated that you are continuing to “review the performance of all our current contractors” to improve customer service.³⁵
- a) Please provide more detail on how you are doing so and whether you will impose penalties against contractors if they fail to meet basic customer service standards.
 - b) Does your ongoing review of servicers’ performance encompass abandon rates, customer satisfaction scores, average speed to answer calls, frequency of communication with delinquent borrowers, speed of IDR application processing, and/or delinquency rates? Please provide this data for each servicer for quarter one and quarter two of 2025.
- 23) A critical customer service responsibility of servicers is to process backlogs in a timely manner. For backlogs of IDR applications, IDR debt relief, PSLF debt relief, and Direct Loan consolidation applications, what share is associated with each loan servicer? What is the size of each backlog for each servicer?

I have further questions regarding the performance of MOHELA, which manages the federal student loans of nearly nine million borrowers.³⁶ MOHELA has consistently exhibited atrocious customer service, even compared to all other federal student loan servicers. For example, in the fourth quarter of 2024, MOHELA took roughly seven times as long to answer phone calls from borrowers compared to the servicer with the second-worst average wait time.³⁷ In what appears to be the Trump Administration’s first public admission that the loan servicer’s customer service needs improvement, your letter mentions that MOHELA’s performance “is steadily showing progress” and that you are helping it manage “the multiple strains on its portfolio to help drive overall improvement.”³⁸ But you failed to provide any hard data or metrics describing MOHELA’s performance or any description of objective standards that you are holding MOHELA to.

- 24) Please provide all customer service metrics that ED has collected regarding MOHELA’s performance during each month since January 2025.
- 25) Please provide more detail on how you are working with MOHELA to improve its performance, including a description of communications ED has had with MOHELA regarding its performance.
- 26) Under what circumstances, if any, would you penalize MOHELA if its performance does not sufficiently improve?

³⁵ Letter from ED Acting Assistant Secretary Sarah Ursprung to Senator Elizabeth Warren, July 21, 2025, p. 4, https://www.warren.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/dept_of_ed_responds_to_senator_warren_tmv5uf85r1vy.pdf.

³⁶ MOHELA, “FFELP Portfolio and USDS Contract,” February 21, 2025, <https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&opi=89978449&url=https://www.mohela.com/dl/common/publicInfo/investorInformation.aspx>.

³⁷ Federal Student Aid, “Loan Servicer Performance: Fiscal Year 2024, Quarter 4,” <https://studentaid.gov/sites/default/files/loan-servicer-performance-fy2024q4.pdf>.

³⁸ Letter from ED Acting Assistant Secretary Sarah Ursprung to Senator Elizabeth Warren, July 21, 2025, p. 4, https://www.warren.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/dept_of_ed_responds_to_senator_warren_tmv5uf85r1vy.pdf.

Your letter also raises further questions regarding Pell Grants, which are a critical lifeline for low- and middle-income students trying to afford college. House Republicans attempted to drastically cut Pell Grants in their proposed version of the *One Big Beautiful Bill Act*, although thankfully these cuts were largely removed from the bill before the final legislation was passed.³⁹ While I am glad that you committed to “administer[ing] Pell Grants as statute requires,”⁴⁰ it is worrying that you called the Pell Grant program financially “unsustainable”⁴¹ without offering a solution, seemingly opening the door to harmful cuts to the program in the future. At the same time, you touted the *One Big Beautiful Bill Act*’s expansion of Pell Grants to very short-term vocational programs, including fully online programs and for-profit programs, with minimal guardrails.⁴² ED’s support for this policy is concerning because very short-term programs largely provide minimal—if any—actual benefits to students’ future earnings and employability, and the quality standards that such programs must meet to become eligible are “easily gamed and manipulated” and “sound[] good on paper, but mean[] little.”⁴³

27) How do you propose addressing the alleged “unsustainable”⁴⁴ nature of the Pell Grant program?

28) How do you propose addressing the problem of very short-term programs, newly eligible for Pell Grants, providing minimal financial value to students?

29) Please explain how ED will hold very short-term programs accountable for meeting the limited quality standards required by the “Big, Beautiful Bill”⁴⁵ and for not misleading students about employment outcomes, given the Department’s vastly reduced staffing since the RIF.

³⁹ The Institute for College Access and Success, “House Republicans Propose Slashing Pell Grants,” Michele Zampini, May 6, 2025, <https://ticas.org/affordability-2/pell-grants-reconciliation-2025/>; National College Attainment Network, “Senate Heeds Call to Protect Pell,” Catherine Brown, Louisa Woodhouse, and MorraLee Keller, June 11, 2025, <https://www.ncan.org/news/703325/Senate-Heeds-Call-to-Protect-Pell-.htm>.

⁴⁰ Letter from ED Acting Assistant Secretary Sarah Ursprung to Senator Elizabeth Warren, July 21, 2025, p. 7, https://www.warren.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/dept_of_ed_responds_to_senator_warren_tm5uf85r1vy.pdf.

⁴¹ *Id.*

⁴² *Id.*; New America, “The Bad Policy That Won’t Die and Has Gotten Worse: Short-Term Pell,” Wesley Whistle and Rachel Fishman, May 7, 2025, <https://www.newamerica.org/education-policy/edcentral/the-bad-policy-that-wont-die-and-has-gotten-worse-short-term-pell/>.

⁴³ New America, “The Bad Policy That Won’t Die and Has Gotten Worse: Short-Term Pell,” Wesley Whistle and Rachel Fishman, May 7, 2025, <https://www.newamerica.org/education-policy/edcentral/the-bad-policy-that-wont-die-and-has-gotten-worse-short-term-pell/>.

⁴⁴ Letter from ED Acting Assistant Secretary Sarah Ursprung to Senator Elizabeth Warren, July 21, 2025, p. 7, https://www.warren.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/dept_of_ed_responds_to_senator_warren_tm5uf85r1vy.pdf.

⁴⁵ *Id.*; New America, “The Bad Policy That Won’t Die and Has Gotten Worse: Short-Term Pell,” Wesley Whistle and Rachel Fishman, May 7, 2025, <https://www.newamerica.org/education-policy/edcentral/the-bad-policy-that-wont-die-and-has-gotten-worse-short-term-pell/>.

Your letter stated that colleges “wait[ed] for years to participate in federal student aid programs”⁴⁶ under the previous Administration and claimed that ED is now addressing this issue by “cutting bureaucracy and streamlining processes,” without providing any concrete examples of how it was doing so. At the same time, you failed to offer a single number or statistic describing ED’s progress towards more rapidly approving colleges’ Title IV aid applications.⁴⁷

- 30) To help illustrate whether this alleged “streamlining” has been successful, please provide data describing the rate at which you have been approving new applications for institutional Title IV eligibility. Among institutions approved for Title IV eligibility in the past three months, how many were public, private non-profit, and private for-profit?

In addition, your letter stated that ED is working to “ensure postsecondary programs are effectively educating the future workforce” and “refocus postsecondary education on improving academic and workforce outcomes.”⁴⁸ Yet, your letter made no mention of ensuring that institutions are accurately representing these workforce outcomes in the statistics they provide to prospective students, even though such misrepresentation is rampant among for-profit colleges.⁴⁹

- 31) In your view, what is the role of ED in enforcing the law against postsecondary institutions who defraud students by misleading them about workforce outcomes such as job placement rates?

- 32) Has ED launched any such enforcement actions against predatory or fraudulent schools since March 2025? Has ED paused any previously ongoing enforcement actions under the Trump Administration?

ED’s Office of Civil Rights (OCR) plays a key role in protecting America’s students from discrimination in schools. However, you fired hundreds of its employees and closed most of its regional offices during the RIF, making it far more difficult for students facing discrimination to access this critical lifeline.⁵⁰

- 33) In response to my question about the size of OCR’s backlog of unaddressed civil rights complaints, you described the number of complaints dismissed or resolved since January 20.⁵¹ You did not provide the number of *new* complaints received since January 20—only

⁴⁶ Letter from ED Acting Assistant Secretary Sarah Ursprung to Senator Elizabeth Warren, July 21, 2025, p. 4, https://www.warren.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/dept_of_ed_responds_to_senator_warren_tmv5uf85r1vy.pdf.

⁴⁷ *Id.*

⁴⁸ *Id.*

⁴⁹ Federal Trade Commission, “FTC Targets False Claims by For-Profit Colleges,” press release, October 6, 2021, <https://www.ftc.gov/news-events/news/press-releases/2021/10/ftc-targets-false-claims-profit-colleges>.

⁵⁰ U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren, “Education At Risk: Frontline Impacts of Trump’s War on Students,” July 2025, pp. 10-11, https://www.warren.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/education_at_risk_-_frontline_impacts_of_trumps_war_on_students.pdf; NPR, “Families say school civil rights investigations have stalled after federal cuts,” Dylan Peers McCoy, April 16, 2025, <https://www.npr.org/2025/04/16/nx-s1-5338830/trump-federal-cuts-civil-rights-education-investigations>.

⁵¹ Letter from ED Acting Assistant Secretary Sarah Ursprung to Senator Elizabeth Warren, July 21, 2025, p. 8, https://www.warren.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/dept_of_ed_responds_to_senator_warren_tmv5uf85r1vy.pdf.

the number received since March 11—making it impossible to calculate the *current* size of the backlog. As of August 2025, what is the size of the OCR backlog?

Finally, your letter claimed you are creating “efficiencies and improved processes” to evaluate OCR complaints more effectively, and that “certain OCR workflows have been reworked to more effectively target subject matter expertise to the particular facts of each case.”⁵² However, the only concrete example provided was the Title IX Special Investigations Team,⁵³ which appears to exist solely for the purpose of investigating schools that have allowed transgender athletes to join sports teams.⁵⁴

34) Please provide more detail regarding the “efficiencies and improved processes”⁵⁵ that you have allegedly created at OCR, including other specific examples.

35) How have you “reworked [processes] to more effectively target subject matter expertise”⁵⁶ for cases related to discrimination against:

- a. Students with disabilities?
- b. Students of color?
- c. LGBTQ+ students?

36) What specific processes account for the unusually rapid pace at which ED has been dismissing civil rights complaints in the last several months, despite its vastly reduced staff?⁵⁷ How has ED’s standard for whether to dismiss a complaint changed relative to its standard during the Biden Administration?

The American people deserve to know how your policies are impacting services and programs that millions of students and families across the country rely upon. I request that you answer my questions and provide all the data requested in this letter by August 20, 2025. Thank you for your attention to these important matters.

⁵² *Id.*

⁵³ *Id.*

⁵⁴ U.S. Department of Education, “U.S Department of Education and U.S. Department of Justice Announce Title IX Special Investigations Team,” press release, April 4, 2025, <https://www.ed.gov/about/news/press-release/us-department-of-education-and-us-department-of-justice-announce-title-ix-special-investigations-team>.

⁵⁵ Letter from ED Acting Assistant Secretary Sarah Ursprung to Senator Elizabeth Warren, July 21, 2025, p. 8, https://www.warren.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/dept_of_ed_responds_to_senator_warren_tmv5uf85r1vy.pdf.

⁵⁶ *Id.*

⁵⁷ Politico, “Education Department dismisses thousands of civil rights complaints at an ‘unheard of’ pace,” Bianca Quilantan, Rebecca Carballo, and Juan Perez. Jr., July 8, 2025, <https://www.politico.com/news/2025/07/08/education-departments-civil-rights-complaint-dismissals-prompt-concern-from-trump-opponents-00439118>.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Elizabeth Warren", written over a horizontal line.

Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator