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February 16, 2017

The Honorable Betsy DeVos
 Secretary
 U.S. Department of Education
 400 Maryland Ave, SW
 Washington, D.C. 20202

Dear Secretary DeVos:

The Committee on Education and the Workforce (Committee) congratulates you on your confirmation as Secretary of the Department of Education (Department). The Department is under the Committee's jurisdiction, so we are eager to establish an effective and collaborative working relationship with you and your staff during the 115th Congress. A significant part of that relationship will entail the Committee's continuing oversight efforts to ensure good governance and the protection of taxpayer dollars. Working together, we can identify and abate fraud, waste, and abuse, as well as better ensure federal policies are efficient, effective, and accountable to the American people.

Congress' broad authority to conduct oversight and investigative actions is inherent in Article I of the U.S. Constitution.¹ The U.S. Supreme Court also has repeatedly ruled that the power to conduct oversight is an essential function of Congress.² Additionally, House rules provide direction to standing committees in matters of oversight. Specifically, House Rule X outlines the organization, general oversight responsibilities, and special oversight functions assigned to standing committees.³ The Committee takes these responsibilities seriously and reserves the right to review and investigate any issues within its jurisdiction.

Rigorous oversight takes many forms. Official hearings, letters, document requests, briefings, roundtables, and informal communications are all an important part of the Committee's oversight responsibilities and will help inform legislative actions throughout the 115th Congress. Further,

¹ U.S. Constitution art. 1

² See, e.g., *Nixon v. Administrator of General Services*, 433 U.S. 435 (1977); *Eastland v. United States Servicemen's Fund*, 421 U.S. 491 (1975); *Barenblatt v. United States*, 360 U.S. 109 (1959); *Watkins v. United States*, 354 U.S. 178 (1957); *McGrain v. Daugherty*, 273 U.S. 135 (1927)

³ House Rule X: Clauses 1, 2, and 3.

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the Committee views oversight as a tool to analyze the efficacy of federal laws, regulations, and programs and to increase transparency regarding the administration's decision-making. These practices will produce more beneficial policies and ensure tax dollars are well-spent.

Again, congratulations on your confirmation. We look forward to working with you and your staff to provide the best possible service and to help ensure that the Department of Education is abiding by the law. In an effort to begin collaboration on common priorities and to build a foundation for a strong working relationship, we encourage your legislative affairs staff to schedule an introductory meeting with Committee staff. We look forward to working together in creating an efficient, accountable government that appropriately serves the American people. Our best wishes.

Sincerely,

Looking forward to our visit together

Virginia

Virginia Foxx
Chairwoman

Brett Guthrie

Brett Guthrie
Chairman
Subcommittee on Higher Education and
Workforce Development

Todd Rokita

Todd Rokita
Chairman
Subcommittee on Early Childhood,
Elementary and Secondary Education