



# COMMITTEE STATEMENT

**Opening Statement of Rep. Tim Walberg (R-MI), Chairman  
Committee on Education and Workforce  
Hearing: “The State of American Education”  
February 5, 2025**

(As prepared for delivery)

Good morning, it is a pleasure to welcome you to the first hearing of the House Committee on Education and Workforce in the 119th Congress.

This morning, we’re here to discuss the state of American education. Unfortunately, many students are failing to graduate from high school or college with the skills needed to be successful. In too many places, education in core subjects like math and reading is being replaced by indoctrination. That must change. I’m pleased to see that the Trump administration is taking excellent steps to restore common sense, personal responsibility, and parental choice to our education system. But this is just the beginning.

In K-12 education, there is much work that needs to be done. Results from the most recent National Assessment of Educational Progress show that students have still not recovered from the pandemic; students are still scoring at lower levels in math and reading than they were in 2019.

One reason for these shocking scores is that many schools have lost focus on teaching the core skills needed for a successful career. While many teachers have done an admirable job helping students recover from learning loss, many systems have become fixated on teaching divisive ideologies. Unfortunately, these efforts have been fueled by the federal government itself. In 2024, researchers with Parents Defending Education found that the Biden-Harris administration spent over \$1 billion on DEI grants.

There is positive news to celebrate in the K-12 arena, however. School choice has grown dramatically in recent years. More than 1 million students are benefiting from private school choice programs, which is about double the number of students from just three years ago.

Additionally, we've seen a grassroots movement of parent involvement. Decades of research has shown that parental involvement, regardless of socioeconomic status or background, has a strong impact on student achievement and long-term success. It is encouraging to see so many parents get more involved in their school systems, as well as the growth of parent advocacy organizations that support them. Their work has been vital to making schools function better.

Turning to higher education, we have seen rampant antisemitism and stifling of speech on campuses fueled by bloated DEI bureaucracies. And America's adversaries are sending billions of foreign funds to schools to manipulate them. All of this has resulted in too many students being told what to think instead of how to think.

It is also the case that our higher education financing system is at a critical inflection point. President Biden attempted to spend \$1 trillion through executive actions on the federal student loan program alone. Transferring student loan responsibilities onto the backs of taxpayers will not solve the underlying issue that the federal student loan program is irreparably broken. What is needed now, more than ever, are real, lasting reforms that protect both students and taxpayers from debt they can't afford. Our Committee has hard work ahead of us to ensure our nation's higher education system remains the crown jewel of the world.

We also must address our broken workforce system. We have about 8 million unfilled jobs in our country, so there is clearly a mismatch between the skills our workforce has and the skills our employers need. Unfortunately, the nation's workforce system, authorized under the *Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act*, or WIOA, is failing to fill in the gap.

Fortunately, our Committee made tremendous strides last Congress in addressing these challenges. A *Stronger Workforce for America Act* passed the House with strong, bipartisan support and, after further negotiations with the Senate late last year, was poised for enactment. I want to thank former Chairwoman Virginia Foxx and Ranking Member Scott for their leadership on that bill, and I look forward to taking it back up in the new Congress.

While we have great challenges ahead of us, we also have great opportunities in front of us, and I look forward to working with all of our Members to meet these challenges. That process starts today, and I am excited for the productive conversation we will have with this great panel of witnesses.