



COMMITTEE ON
EDUCATION & LABOR
REPUBLICANS

COMMITTEE
STATEMENT

Opening Statement of Rep. Virginia Foxx (R-NC), Republican Leader

Full Committee Markup

"H.Res. 1295 - Of inquiry directing the Secretary of Education to transmit certain documents to the House of Representatives relating to the Department of Education's cost estimates for the Secretary's waivers related to public service loan forgiveness and income-driven repayment; H.Res. 1296 - Of inquiry requesting the President and directing the Secretary of Education to transmit, respectively, certain documents to the House of Representatives relating to the legal authority to forgive Federal student loan debt, and H.Res. 1273 - Of inquiry directing the President to provide certain documents in the President's possession to the House of Representatives relating to communication between the executive branch and the American Federation of Teachers regarding reopening schools and supporting safe, in-person learning"

September 15, 2022

(As prepared for delivery)

"Democrats want unfettered control over our education system from kindergarten to college, and they'll use every avenue to achieve their desired end goal. We must resist this state-sponsored indoctrination campaign.

"When the executive branch oversteps its bounds, the only appropriate response is holding it to account. From encouraging school shutdowns to enacting retroactive free college, the executive branch has broken free of its leash. That's precisely why Republicans have introduced three separate resolutions of inquiry. The requested documents in these resolutions are integral to the oversight authorities of this committee and the American people deserve a transparent government.

"We will first consider two postsecondary education-related resolutions. H. Res. 1295 demands the Biden administration provide cost estimates for its changes to the Public Service Loan Forgiveness program and the Income-Driven Repayment program. This is not something we should have to ask for. The Biden administration should be forthcoming with these numbers instead of trying to hide them from taxpayers.

"President Biden is making radical changes to the student loan program through executive fiat and must be held accountable. These programs are already costing taxpayers billions more than originally estimated, but these changes will increase costs exponentially.

"The documents we have requested will help us understand what the true cost of Biden's unilateral actions will be, what estimates the administration used to make the decision to erase these debts owed to the taxpayer, and what the impacts are to taxpayers.

“We will also consider H. Res. 1296, which directs the Biden administration to provide documents related to the administration’s legal authority to transfer federal student loans to taxpayers.

“The Biden administration’s student loan bailout is an illegal power grab. Even Nancy Pelosi argued that President Biden does not have the authority to cancel student loans.

“This \$500 billion wealth transfer from hardworking Americans will cost taxpayers at least \$2,500 each and exacerbate Biden’s inflation crisis. These kinds of fiscally irresponsible measures are the last thing our country needs.

“Biden’s student loan debt scheme will make our broken postsecondary education system even worse. It will set the precedent for politically driven loan cancellation, which encourages students to borrow as much as possible because they expect taxpayers to foot the bill.

“It will also encourage colleges and universities to continue increasing the cost of overvalued degrees that do not lead to a return on investment.

“This move by the Biden administration will have cascading consequences—ones that will affect generations of students to come. Those in the Biden administration should ask themselves whether buying a few votes before the Midterms is worth the cost.

“To conduct proper oversight, we need to know who the administration met with, did those with conflicts participate in the meetings, and were there other legal opinions the administration considered.

“Lastly, we will consider H.Res.1273, which directs the Biden administration to provide documents relating to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Director Dr. Rochelle Walensky’s decision to change school reopening guidelines at the behest of the American Federation of Teachers President Randi Weingarten.

“Collusion between America’s most powerful teachers union and the CDC is a blight upon the educational pursuits of America’s children. Instead of relying on science and statistical evidence, Dr. Walensky changed school opening guidelines to appease the administration’s political allies. Let me be abundantly clear, teachers unions should never be allowed to hold schools hostage again.

“The consequences of prolonged school closures have been expansive and severe, most notably in the realm of academic performance. Over half of public school teachers admitted school closures have caused significant learning loss for students.

“According to the most recent National Assessment of Educational Progress report, reading and math scores plummeted during the pandemic. In fact, 9-year-olds lost 20 years of academic progress, meaning children today are posting the same test scores in reading and math as children did two decades ago.

“It’s evident that this administration, and this Democrat majority, have failed our nation’s children. The last time I checked, that’s not something you hang your hat on.

“Students must be put first. Full transparency from the Biden administration about its imprudent decisions that harmed so many students is essential.

“I hope my colleagues will join us in supporting these resolutions since the documents being requested today will bring more transparency to Congress and the American people.”

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