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COMMITTEE ON
EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
2176 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6100

March 4, 2024

The Honorable Gene L. Dodaro
Comptroller General
U.S. Government Accountability Office
441 G Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20548

Dear Comptroller General Dodaro:

The Committee on Education and the Workforce (Committee) is tasked with the important and necessary responsibility of oversight of federal executive branch agencies within its jurisdiction. I write to you today because I am deeply concerned by the Department of Education's (Department) lack of responsiveness to the Committee's oversight requests. The Department's failure to cooperate with the Committee undermines Congress' work on behalf of the American people.

As you know, the Committee has been granted legislative and oversight authority over the "organization, administration, and general management of the Department of Education" as well as education matters, generally, as described in the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, 118th Congress.¹ The Committee's oversight of the Department includes antisemitism on university campuses, the Biden administration's student loan bailout scams, the funding of American universities by foreign adversaries, borrower defenses to repayment of student loans, the return to repayment of loans, and the recent botched roll out of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid.

I have submitted many requests for information to the Department, yet it has continually failed to respond in a timely manner. For example, the Committee faced stonewalling when it asked for documents, briefings, and transcribed interviews to detail how the Department planned to restart student loan payments after a three-year freeze on payments due to COVID. On May 24, 2023, Chairman Comer and I transmitted a letter along with four document requests to Secretary Cardona requesting information on how the administration has been handling borrower defense to repayment claims.² It was not until September 15, 2023, that the Department transmitted a

¹ Rules of the House of Representatives, 118th Cong. at 7, 9-10 (Jan. 10, 2023).

² The letter included three additional document requests unrelated to the administration's handling of borrower defense to repayments claims.

letter that included the procedural status of *Sweet v. Cardona* and was accompanied by a copy of the order governing the settlement, information that was publicly available. On October 31, 2023, the Committee issued a subpoena to the Secretary due to the Department's unwillingness to provide the requested borrower defense information. Now – nearly four months after being compelled to produce information – the Department has still not fully complied with the subpoena.

To learn more about how the Department responds to congressional requests, I ask the Government Accountability Office to examine the following questions:

1. What is the Department's process for responding to congressional oversight requests for information about postsecondary programs?
2. What is known about the timeliness of the Department's responses to these requests?

Thank you for your assistance in this matter. Should you have any questions, please contact Gabriella Pistone with the Committee on Education and the Workforce at gabriella.pistone@mail.house.gov or 202-225-4527.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Virginia Foxx". The signature is fluid and cursive, with "Virginia" on the top line and "Foxx" on the bottom line.

Virginia Foxx
Chairwoman
U. S. House Committee on
Education and the Workforce