

February 10, 2025

Dear Members of the House Committee on Education & the Workforce,

I am writing to emphasize the critical importance of transparency where foreign spending in American higher education is concerned. As the president of the James G. Martin Center for Academic Renewal, a nonprofit organization committed to excellence and accountability in higher education, I am deeply concerned about potential threats to our academic institutions from malicious foreign actors. The Defending Education Transparency and Ending Rogue Regimes Engaging in Nefarious Transactions (DETERRENT) Act addresses these concerns.

Today, higher education in our nation faces several significant threats:

1. **Increased Vulnerability to Foreign Influence:** The absence of stringent financial-reporting requirements and transparent oversight may expose American institutions to increased vulnerability to foreign influence. This influence, if left unchecked, could compromise the autonomy and integrity of our higher education system.
2. **National Security Risks:** Failure to implement the DETERRENT Act may result in inadequate monitoring of foreign funding sources, potentially exposing our universities to activities (e.g., theft of trade secrets) that pose risks to national security. By not addressing this issue, we jeopardize the safety and well-being of our academic communities and the nation at large.
3. **Undermining Academic Freedom:** Lack of transparency regarding foreign funding can lead to the compromising of academic freedom. Undisclosed financial support given with ulterior motives may impact the objectivity and independence of academic research and discourse. Undisclosed foreign funding may be used to manipulate academic agendas, impacting the pursuit of knowledge and the education of future leaders.
4. **Compromised Research Integrity:** Without the DETERRENT Act, there is a heightened risk of compromised research integrity. Undisclosed foreign funds may influence research agendas, leading to potential biases that could undermine the credibility of academic scholarship.
5. **Erosion of Public Trust:** Public confidence in the educational system relies on knowing that academic institutions operate with integrity and accountability. The lack of transparency concerning foreign gifts and contracts could further erode public trust in higher education institutions.

I hope you will carefully consider the DETERRENT Act as a solution to mitigate these threats and ensure the continued strength, resilience, and integrity of our higher education system. The potential consequences of foreign interference in American higher education are too important to ignore.

Thank you for your attention to this pressing matter. I look forward to your support in safeguarding the future of higher education in our nation.

Sincerely,



Jenna A. Robinson  
President, James G. Martin Center for Academic Renewal