



COMMITTEE STATEMENT

Opening Statement of Subcommittee Republican Leader Greg Murphy, M.D. (R-NC) at Joint Subcommittee Hearing: "Examining the Implementation of COVID-19 Funds"
November 17, 2021

(As prepared for delivery)

"Congressional oversight of the federal government is one of this committee's most important duties. This includes, among other things, ensuring taxpayer dollars are being used effectively and for their intended purposes.

"There is no such thing as 'government funded' programs; there is only 'taxpayer funded' programs, and those hardworking taxpayers deserve to know how their money is being spent.

"Like other industries, the pandemic caught higher education flat footed. In response, Congress provided colleges and universities over \$70 billion in relief funding on top of the over \$100 billion in grants, loans, and other student aid appropriated by Congress each year.

"While this support was a lifeline to many institutions of higher education, many schools were already struggling prior to this once in a generation pandemic. COVID-19 only accelerated the need for those institutions to rethink their business models if they are to survive in the future and shed further light on the issues that have long plagued our higher education system.

"Regardless, despite what some think, as major recipients of taxpayer dollars, institutions of higher education are not exempt from congressional oversight and

accountability.

“As it stands, 40 percent of all students fail to graduate from a university or college within six years. For those students who do complete their degree, they often find themselves ill-prepared for the workforce and worse off financially than they would have been if they had not attended that college or university.

“Yet, many of my colleagues suggest the solution is to double down on the misguided idea that more money means better outcomes. When colleges spend exorbitant amounts of taxpayer dollars on administrative salaries and administrative bloat instead of innovative ways to improve student outcomes, more money will result in much more of the same and poor student outcomes.

“It is Congress and this Department’s responsibility to ensure colleges and universities spend tax dollars in a way that helps students—which is why I’m happy that we are having this hearing today.

“Unfortunately, however, I share the concern of many of my colleagues that the Department is too focused on implementing their progressive wish list and attacking colleges based upon their tax status to carry out their necessary oversight of the \$280 billion in pandemic relief funds the Department is responsible for.

“That said, I am looking forward to hearing from Mr. Kvaal and Ms. Marten – whom I hope will provide some clarity regarding the numerous tasks they are responsible for overseeing at the Department.

“Lastly, I’d just like to express a concern of mine regarding witness testimony. Our ability to provide sufficient oversight is hindered when witnesses don’t have the courtesy to provide their testimony in a timely manner as what’s happened here. My hope is that this does not become a pattern and that our witnesses today do a better job of respecting this committee in the future.”