



## COMMITTEE STATEMENT

Opening Statement of Rep. Tim Walberg (R-MI), Chairman  
Committee on Education and Workforce  
“Examining the Policies and Priorities of the Department of Education”  
June 4, 2025

(As prepared for delivery)

It is a pleasure to welcome Secretary Linda McMahon to the Committee on Education and Workforce. Madam Secretary, thank you for being here. Since you were sworn in on March 3rd, you have made it your mission to address the glaring problems you inherited from your predecessor and begin the process of rightsizing the Department of Education so we can return education to the states. I want to address each of these core parts of your mission in turn.

First, the glaring problems. At the K-12 level, less than one-third of the eighth graders in America can read or do math at grade level. To put that into perspective, if the nation’s report card were an actual report card a 100 percent improvement on the next iteration of the test would still leave us with a failing grade. Unfortunately, too many in our education system are more invested in protecting their monopoly power over kids’ futures or indoctrinating students into leftwing ideology than teaching them basic skills, developing their critical thinking, and expanding their educational choices.

At the postsecondary level, your predecessor used billions of taxpayer funds to pursue illegal student loan schemes meant to shift responsibility for student loan debt from the individuals who took it on to taxpayers who paid off their debt or never went to college in the first place. In

addition, the Biden-Harris administration ignored the Congressional mandate for student loan repayments to resume, breaking the student loan system and creating chaos for borrowers. All the while, Democrats have been happy to let the postsecondary education industry continue bilking students, their families, and taxpayers while in many cases delivering a product that leaves students worse off than if they had never attended college at all.

At all levels of education, your predecessor weaponized the Office for Civil Rights to inflict dangerous and radical ideologies on students and their families while simultaneously taking a hands-off approach to the exploding crisis of antisemitism in our nation's schools and colleges. I have been heartened to see your aggressive actions to protect the dignity, safety, and academic and athletic opportunities of women and girls from a radical gender ideology that ignores basic biology. I've also been heartened by your desire to bring to light discriminatory DEI practices in our schools that dehumanize people. And I've been especially happy to see your Department's response to the indifference too many education leaders continue to show in the face of ongoing threats to Jewish students.

Second, I applaud you for embracing a final mission for the Department of Education. I imagine we will have a vigorous debate about this today, because the Republican and Democrat parties have competing visions for education in this country.

There is an implication in the criticism leveled at you, Madam Secretary, that the status quo is fine. Really, the implication is that the status quo is more than fine. The minority wants us to believe that the Department of Education is overseeing an education system in which students are thriving, and employers have access to a workforce prepared to succeed.

Neither of those are true. As I mentioned earlier, our K-12 education performance is abysmal. At the postsecondary level, the national six-year graduation rate is just over 60 percent. In other words, our colleges

and universities would get an F on their primary responsibility. And the college-for-all mentality driven by the previous administration's student loan schemes has only made the problem worse. Our education system has failed to prepare a workforce with the skills employers need. Again, this is what Democrats are defending.

Republicans believe there is a better way. We believe in reducing bureaucracy, trusting our educators, trusting our state and local leaders, and trusting the innovators who are pushing against the barriers thrown up by the bureaucracy. And above all, we trust our parents.

This is our vision. And thankfully, we finally have an administration in place that shares this vision. The Trump administration is eliminating bureaucracy where it isn't needed. It is also implementing federal guardrails when needed, like enforcing Title IX to protect the rights of women and girls, protecting access to education for students with disabilities, holding colleges and universities accountable for tolerating mass harassment of Jewish students, or preventing efforts to exclude parents from their children's education. In these ways, the Trump administration is streamlining bureaucracy so that the federal government can better deliver on the responsibilities it has.

Madam Secretary, again, thank you for being here. I look forward to hearing more about your plans to continue cleaning up the mess you inherited and your vision for an education system that puts students, not bureaucracies, first. I will now yield to the Ranking Member for his opening statement.