

February 23, 2015

Representative John Kline
Chairman
U.S. House Committee on Education
and the Workforce
2181 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Representative Virginia Foxx
Chairwoman
Subcommittee on Higher Education and
Workforce Training
U.S. House Committee on Education
and the Workforce
2181 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Representative Alcee Hastings
United States House of Representatives
2353 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Representative Matt Salmon
United States House of Representatives
2349 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Kline, Chairwoman Foxx, Representative Hastings and Representative Salmon:

We write in support of H.R. 970, the Supporting Academic Freedom through Regulatory Relief Act. Colleges and universities fully recognize the need for safeguarding public funds and for being fully accountable to the taxpayers who provide those funds. However, in recent years the sheer volume, ineffectiveness and cost of the regulations and related actions promulgated or proposed by the Department of Education have far exceeded what might reasonably be required for these purposes.

While we share many of the Department's stated goals, and have made repeated efforts to inform and improve their regulatory approaches, the agency has been unable or unwilling to address our concerns. Given their insistence on moving forward with these flawed approaches, congressional action is warranted.

Several of the regulations addressed in H.R. 970 have been so poorly crafted that they do (or would do) nothing to advance the goals they were intended to serve. They fail to achieve their intended outcomes, yet impose significant costs and burdens on institutions. We are alarmed that the two pending administrative actions under consideration by the Department -- the college ratings system and a federalized teacher preparation program accountability system-- will be similarly burdensome with no public benefit. Worse still, they have the potential to do considerable harm to many institutions and the students they serve.

We understand this bill will prevent further action by the Department on some of these regulations and administrative actions until Congress reauthorizes the Higher Education

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Act, and will permanently bar others. This is a necessary step to ensure that higher education issues are addressed in a thoughtful, comprehensive way with the full input of Congress and other stakeholders.

In the event that this bill requires a budgetary offset, we would strongly encourage the committee to look only for savings outside of the student aid programs in order to avoid harming students.

We thank you for your support of America's college and universities and the students they serve, and we look forward to working with you to advance this important legislation.

Sincerely,



Molly Corbett Broad
President

MCB/ldw

On behalf of:

Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, Western Association of
Schools and Colleges
American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education
American Association of Colleges of Nursing
American Association of Community Colleges
American Association of State Colleges and Universities
American Council on Education
American Dental Education Association
American Indian Higher Education Consortium
Association of American Medical Colleges
Association of American Universities
Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities
Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities
College and University Professional Association for Human Resources
Commission on Institutions of Higher Education, New England Association of Schools and
Colleges
Council of Graduate Schools
Council for Higher Education Accreditation
Council of Independent Colleges
EDUCAUSE

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Middle States Commission on Higher Education
National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities
National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators
Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities
Senior College and University Commission, Western Association of
Schools and Colleges
Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges
The Higher Learning Commission, North Central Association
UNCF
University Professional and Continuing Education Association

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Senator Richard Burr
United States Senate
217 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Burr:

We write in support of the Supporting Academic Freedom through Regulatory Relief Act. Colleges and universities fully recognize the need for safeguarding public funds and for being fully accountable to the taxpayers who provide those funds. However, in recent years the sheer volume, ineffectiveness and cost of the regulations and related actions promulgated or proposed by the Department of Education have far exceeded what might reasonably be required for these purposes.

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We understand this bill will prevent further action by the Department on some of these regulations and administrative actions until Congress reauthorizes the Higher Education Act, and will permanently bar others. This is a necessary step to ensure that higher education issues are addressed in a thoughtful, comprehensive way with the full input of Congress and other stakeholders.

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