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April 2, 2019

Education & Labor Committee
United States House
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative:

On behalf of our 3 million members and the 50 million students they serve from pre-kindergarten through college, we would like to submit for the record the following comments in connection with the April 3 hearing, “Strengthening Accountability in Higher Education to Better Serve Students and Taxpayers.”

NEA members believe all students must have access to an education that prepares them to be employees, entrepreneurs, and leaders in a global community. This means protecting students from the predatory practices of for-profit colleges and universities. Too often, these institutions promise an education they do not deliver, instead leaving students with significant, high levels of debt, often in the absence of earning a diploma or completing a program.

It is no coincidence that such institutions target vulnerable populations with limited options and few resources, including students of color, low-income students, veterans, first-generation college students, and other underrepresented groups.

We believe the 2014 Gainful Employment regulation must be codified to hold career programs accountable for charging too much and failing to deliver, and ask that the 90/10 rule be restored to 85/15, reinstating to 85 percent the cap on how much revenue for-profit colleges can receive from federal sources.

Accreditation by reputable accreditors must continue to be a condition for participation in federal financial aid programs, and accreditors must be free from conflicts of interest that could affect their ability to judge institutions’ integrity, quality, and transparency.

We must ensure safeguards are in place at for-profit institutions that protect students from fraud and abuse. Furthermore, when institutions victimize students, there must be an efficient system for providing restitution, restoring eligibility for Pell Grants, and clarifying students’ eligibility for class-wide discharge of student loans.

Thank you for this opportunity to share our concerns about accountability standards. Our nation has an obligation to protect students from institutions that take advantage of them, denying them opportunities to discover their talents and achieve their potential.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marc Egan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Marc Egan
Director of Government Relations
National Education Association