

Education and Labor Committee
Chairman Bobby Scott
Policies of the Department of Education: Betsy DeVos

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Opening by Chairman Scott

- Department doesn't answer questions:
 - Did not implement Every Student Succeeds Act -> measure achievement act on subgroup performance
 - Not implemented Borrower's Defense Rule
 - Rescind racial disparities in school disciplines
 - Used school shootings when discriminate against students of color
 - Delayed IDEA rule -> special education assistance help -> Federal Court ruled against this
 - Used taxpayers funds to armed teachers
 - Reinstatement of accrediting trouble -> low qualities schools

Opening Statement by Ranking Member Foxx

- Republicans are committed to programs for high quality and effective education
- DeVos reduced regulatory burden and bring flexibility
- Not enough workers have enough skills to fill jobs -> need more skills based education
 - Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act -> signed into law last July
 - Expand school choice
- Walberg (MI) - friend and supporter of DeVos and heavily praises her

Opening Statement by Secretary DeVos

- Federal taxpayers spending on education has increased, but lagging behind in reading, math, and writing
- Focus on freedom for every student -> where and how it works for them
 - Education Freedom Scholarships (501(c)3 funds from volunteers for tax credit to provide scholarships for the states to structure how to implement scholarship programs)
- Federal student aid hold \$1.5 trillion in student loans
- Want to raise tax on students to 12.5% of income to pay off loans
- Teacher Vouchers -> mentors and programs to design their own structures for classrooms
- Develop own school emergency plans

Questions and Answers

Texas Tech Case

- Texas Tech no longer to use race in admissions -> 14 year old case, TT entered into this voluntarily
 - Less African Americans in medical school now than in 1978 -> following SC guidelines around this, but there is not an “offensive” measure by DOE to do this

Education Freedom Scholarship Act

- Education Freedom Scholarship Act -> program helps rural students because students can take online classes (school choice) or several student who need other types of learning (micro school in public school for other type of education), technical and transportation scholarship could be available = states can structure this

Charter Schools

- Want \$60 million for charter school programs, yet they have been operating in deficit for years
 - ACICS reinstated even though has some of the largest failures of higher education institutions -> requested this documentation but never given
 - Hoping to get a response in 2 weeks
 - Accredited institutions that continued or has history to do this
 - Courts forced them to re-examine ACICS via a study
- After school programing, STEM education, and mental health funding cut
 - Charter schools have obtained this funding, yet \$1 billion in fraud from last year alone in charter schools
 - Funding for charter school will come at the expense of public schools

Federal Loan Oversight

- DOE has shut off information to state law enforcement / AGs who have been addressing federal student and student loan scams and fraud -> Congress directed them in 2019 to do this
- AL and FL have not improved in academic performance -> refuted by DeVos
 - The Freedom Scholarship costs \$5 billion debt by matching 1-1 dollars tax credits
- Would cost \$150 billion a year to bring poor schools into good condition -> attack on rural districts

Discrimination

- Initiative to examine poor enforcement of discipline (inclusion and restraint)
- Hold webinars and technical assistance for web accessibility for institutions
- Transgender guidance rolled back -> leads to lower grades/depression/anxiety -> Yes, she admitted to knowing this
 - She knew that rolling back this guidance knowing that it leads to increasing suicide rates (Bonamici)

- Colleges to use racial and economic formulas to achieve more diversity -> SC gave guidance on this and DOE will obey this
- DOE subgroup performance action
 - Not answered
- Title IV A Funds are cut and spread to thin
- Completely gutting Special Olympics, flat funding for IDEA = cuts for infants with disabilities (student who have been exposed to addition in utero)
 - Cut budget because those to help those with the most needs = conveyed that this is not disabilities
- Disparate Impact Analysis -> discipline students based on race? Legal and required under Title XI

Borrower Defense

- No borrower defense claims have been approved 0 claims in past several months due to a court case, yet it ordered her to implement the rule
- 160,000 claims are there, but are being closed -> they appeared to be cherry picking them in order to close them out = not rejected or accepted a single claim

Emergency Response

- Title IV funds are only supposed to be used by the states, and the DOE has not advocated for or against which policies to use funds for school emergencies. -> DeVos refused to deny states the right to use funds to arm teachers (this was seen in emails leaked to major media outlets). DeVos's memo actually confirms that she does have the ability to tell states that they cannot use the money for arming teachers.
- Legacy consideration should not be a big thing (Stevens)

Other

- Trying to modernize Financial Aid framework -> more audits?
- Is there a way to supplement public school teacher income? ->
 - Teacher voucher program and Teacher in Residency program, but this would not translate into increasing the income of teachers

Secretary DeVos Statement

<https://edlabor.house.gov/imo/media/doc/SecretaryDeVosTestimony041019.pdf>

Chairman Scott Statement

<https://edlabor.house.gov/imo/media/doc/2019-04-10%20Chairman%20Scott%20DeVos%20Hearing%20Opening%20Statement.pdf>