



May 21, 2025

The Honorable Bill Cassidy
455 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Cassidy:

On behalf of Consumer Action for a Strong Economy (CASE) and the 10 organizations and individuals signed below, I am today writing to urge you to swiftly approve President Trump's remaining appointees to the U.S. Department of Education.

As you well know, *President Trump was elected with a mandate from the American people to restore control where it belongs—with parents, school boards, and local authorities.* Accordingly, the President picked the right leader in Secretary Linda McMahon to deliver on this charge, and we applaud you for voting to approve her nomination.

Conversely, under the Biden-Harris Administration, the Department of Education waged an unprecedented assault on career-education and faith-based colleges and universities. As a [CASE report](#) last year details, the previous administration weaponized the Federal Student Aid Office of Enforcement to execute a “sue-and-settle” campaign targeted at career colleges – a transparent attempt to tarnish their reputations, discourage enrollment, and drive them into the ground—with the ultimate goal of pushing mass student debt cancellation on the public and propping up failing public, private, and state-run colleges and universities.

We at CASE encourage you to learn more about these issues at [CollegeFreedomProject.org](#), including our 2025 policy agenda, which we strongly believe closely mirrors the philosophy that you and President Trump share.

Similarly, Secretary McMahon has not shied away from President Trump's directive to reduce the waste and bureaucracy at the Department of Education—and to potentially dismantle the agency for good. However, she is working to correct the course of a deeply entrenched establishment with only half a bench. We understand that the following three presidential appointees to the Department of Education will be considered for confirmation this Thursday, May 22, and we encourage you to expeditiously approve their service:

- **Kirsten Baesler, Assistant Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education:** Ms. Baesler is currently the longest-tenured chief state school officer in the country, serving as North Dakota's elected state superintendent of public instruction. A supporter of both public and private faith-based education alternatives, Ms. Baesler has built a reputation for championing personalized competency-based learning, implementing the choice ready accountability framework to ensure students are graduating with the knowledge,

- skills, and experiences to be successful in work, college, or military, and leading statewide efforts to improve student academic achievement.
- **Nicholas Kent, Under Secretary:** His experience serving career colleges indicates that he understands the importance of educational choice and that he will fight to undo the previous administration's biased regulatory framework. As a champion for free speech and intellectual freedom in our public institutions, Mr. Kent is a leader who will put American education back on track.
- **Kevin O'Farrell, Ph.D., Assistant Secretary for Career and Technical Education:** Mr. O'Farrell most recently served as Florida's Chancellor for the Division of Career and Adult Education. Having previously held leadership positions at Pasco-Hernando State College and Trinity College of Florida, Mr. O'Farrell's experiences closely reflect President Trump's directive to connect Americans to high-wage, quickly growing career opportunities that do not require traditional four-year college degrees.

We also respectfully request that you confirm the following appointees when their nominations come before your Committee at a later date:

- **Penny Schwinn, Deputy Secretary of Education:** A former educator and prior Commissioner of the Tennessee Department of Education, Dr. Schwinn has vast experience at all levels of the education system, including expanding school choice.
- **Mary Christina Riley, Assistant Secretary for Legislation and Congressional Affairs:** An experienced policy expert specializing in higher education and workforce development, Ms. Riley will bring a demonstrated record of success in government and with non-profit organizations to the Department of Education coordination with Congress.

These individuals have been appointed to positions that directly handle education issues upon which our coalition has advocated and will continue to advocate.

However, each of President Trump's nominees—all of whom will play an important role in supporting Secretary McMahan and advancing the President's agenda—deserve a confirmation vote, and we encourage you to support them.

I will follow up with your office to ensure receipt of this letter and welcome the opportunity to discuss this issue with you further. Thank you again for your time and consideration, it is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Gerard Scimeca
 Chairman & General Counsel
 Consumer Action for a Strong Economy

Peter W. Wood
President
National Association of Scholars

George Landrith
President
Frontiers of Freedom

Wendy Damron
President & CEO
Palmetto Promise

Seton Motley
Founder & President
Less Government

Jim L. Martin
Founder & President
60 Plus Association

Saulius "Saul" Anuzis
President
American Association of Senior Citizens

Paul Gessing
President
Rio Grande Foundation

Bob Carey
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Jenna Robinson
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Adam Kissel
Board Member
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Cc: Senator Rand Paul
Senator Susan Collins
Senator Lisa Murkowski
Senator Markwayne Mullin
Senator Roger Marshall
Senator Tim Scott
Senator Josh Hawley
Senator Tommy Tuberville