



Chairman Rodney Frelinghuysen

House Committee on Appropriations

Department of Education FY 2018 Budget Hearing Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos May 24, 2017 Opening Statement As Prepared

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the time and I want to welcome Secretary DeVos to the Appropriations Committee. We look forward to your testimony and hearing your frank and candid views on the many issues.

Today's hearing is an important part of the oversight duties of this Committee. Now that we have formally received the Administration's budget request, the Committee will undertake a thorough analysis. We will go through each and every budget line, question every witness and demand credible spending justifications and only then will we make our own determinations on the best use of tax-dollars.

We intend to put forward a complete set of appropriations bills that adequately fund important programs while working to reduce or eliminate waste and duplication.

I will work with the Ms. Lowey, the Chairman and Ranking Member to move rapidly in coming weeks and months to complete the fiscal year 2018 Appropriations bills.

Again, today's hearing is a part of the process we follow to determine the best use of taxpayer's dollars. After all, the "power of the purse" lies in this building - it is the Constitutional duty of Congress to make spending decisions on behalf of the people we represent at home.

We owe it to our young people to ensure that they have access to the best education possible and your Department is vital in keeping this promise. Many programs administered by the Department of Education, like Pell Grants and those established by the Individuals with Disabilities Act, ensure young people are not denied a quality education.

I visit many wonderful schools in my district, some of the best in the nation, throughout the school year and hear from students, teachers and parents on a range of issues.

In middle schools and high schools, I often hear about the benefits of "a well-rounded" education supported by the Every Student Succeeds Act, which allows students to pursue interests in the arts, music or physical education as well as science, math and English.

In colleges and universities in my district, many students remind me that they would not have this opportunity without programs like Pell Grants or Federal Work Study. I am eager to hear how your Department will ensure opportunity for these students under proposed reductions, including the elimination of Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants (SEOG).

Further, these goals can only be met by ensuring the next generation of teachers have access to a quality higher education and the necessary tools in their careers.

We need to work in a bipartisan way to ensure that every child in America is well educated.

In conclusion, I welcome you, Madam Secretary. I look forward to hearing from you and working with you in the months ahead.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

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