



Chairman Tom Cole

*Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education, and Related Agencies
House Committee on Appropriations*

**Opening Statement (as prepared)
FY19 Budget Hearing
Secretary of Education
March 20, 2018**

Good Morning, Madam Secretary. It is my pleasure to welcome you to the Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services and Education. We are looking forward to hearing your testimony.

Madame Secretary, your job bears great responsibility - ensuring high quality education in this country affects not only the future of each individual, but also the collective economic well-being of the nation. While much of the funding and policy for education lies at the state and local level, the weight of the federal dollars carries importance and influence, so it's our responsibility to ensure they are being targeted to the best and most effective programs with a high degree of accountability.

Your request continues to prioritize resources to certain populations of children who need additional support. I appreciate the continued investment into these programs, such as for children with special needs and disabilities, for Indian education and rural education, and to support English learners.

However, I am concerned about the Administration continuing to request cuts that the Congress has rejected. One example I am particularly concerned with is the repeat proposal to decrease funding for Impact Aid which is an important source of resources for school districts that are financially burdened by their large amount of federal property. My colleagues and I will be interested in hearing what your plans are to better understand the economic effects of the federal presence in districts, as you cite in the budget proposal.

We also bear the responsibility to ensure there are various affordable paths to a lucrative career, whether that includes college, technical school, or other training. Your budget proposes a number of actions in the realm of career and technical education, as well as changes to programs that support college education for those from disadvantaged backgrounds. The proposal also includes an expansion of Pell eligibility to short-term high-quality programs that provide a certification or licensing. Additionally, the budget again proposes deep cuts to some student financial assistance programs. I look forward to discussing those proposals with you today.

I understand that again, action by the Congress just before the budget was released made some of the information provided to this Committee out of date even just as it was being presented to us. And now, based on our action this week, you now have more information on Congressional priorities fiscal year 18. For example, your budget continues to request no funding for the Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants, which supports school-based mental health services, bullying prevention; and professional development for personnel in crisis management.

We look forward to continuing a conversation about where the Administration prioritizes funding in a less constrained environment than we had been under.

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