

Rep. Joe Wilson

Statement for the Record and Questions For the Record

Committee on Education and the Workforce

U.S. House of Representatives

Hearing on “Examining the Policies and Priorities of the Department of Education”

Hon. Miguel Cardona, Secretary

May 16, 2023

Mr. Secretary, it is sad, as cited by Ranking Member Bobby Scott, that educational opportunities in America are unchanged for decades. I believe this is due to unrealistic federal interference. I have faith in elected local school boards. I believe the Department of Education should be abolished to benefit students, families, and educators.

Gainful Employment Rule

Secretary Cardona, two years ago when you appeared before this committee you unconditionally supported the concept that the Department should hold all postsecondary institutions equally accountable. In March 2022, the Department published an issue paper during Negotiated Rulemaking that would recreate the Gainful Employment Rule, applicable only to proprietary education and non-degree credential programs. In effect, with your current bifurcated approach, you are not providing students with the assurances they deserve before they spend their time and money pursuing any degree or credential-whether from a proprietary college, a nondegree credential program, or non-profit college. Indeed, just five percent of students are enrolled at institutions that would be subject to this proposal which leaves the vast majority of students unprotected from programs that provide little or no financial value, and burdened with catastrophic debt.

Q. Given that the Department apparently has the authority to create universal accountability across all schools, and given your prior statement, why has the Department proposed an incomplete accountability framework?

Charter Schools

Mr. Secretary, a 2022 national survey conducted by The Harris Poll found that 81% of parents support expanding the number of slots in existing public charter schools in their area and 78% want more public charter school offerings in their area. Even among parents who might not choose to enroll their own children in a charter school, 84% agree that charter schools should be available to the families who would choose them.

Mr. Secretary, I’m concerned about charter schools’ access to facilities. Are you aware that access to facilities is the top cost for charter schools to open or expand?