

House Committee on Education and Workforce
Member Day Hearing
Prepared Testimony of Representative Mark Takano (CA-39)
Friday, November 21 2025

Chairman Walberg, Ranking Member Scott, and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit this written testimony. I applaud your leadership and appreciate you allowing Members to share their priorities. In that spirit, I implore the Committee to provide robust support for student borrowers and overtime protections for hardworking Americans. It is of equal importance that we support Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs) as they navigate the Trump Administration's unilateral cancellation of many of their grants and funding. All three of these issues will have a major impact on the landscape for American students and worker success in this country.

The American Dream is built on the promise of a high-quality education. We tell our students that if you work hard, you can access some of the best educational opportunities in the world and build a life-sustaining career. However, this Dream is only a reality if institutions are held accountable for providing students with a high-quality education and student borrowers are protected from predatory practices that would leave them crushed by debt.

In an era when young people are skeptical about the cost-benefit relationship to a college education and the political atmosphere has been hostile to educational institutions, Congress must demonstrate our commitment to students with targeted and thoughtful policy. This Committee is tasked with providing equal education and opportunity for every student, regardless of their background.

To that end, my legislation, the PROTECT Students Act, addresses several areas of the college experience to ensure students are safeguarded. This bill increases oversight of institutions of higher education, makes it easier for students to eliminate their loans if they were defrauded and eases the ability of students to bring class action lawsuits against for-profit universities, holds universities accountable by ensuring schools are honest about their job placement data, predatory recruitment tactics, and ensure that former fraudsters cannot prey on students again.

The PROTECT Students Act will save taxpayers millions of dollars each year by preventing student aid money being paid out to programs that do not deliver for students – programs that far too often leave students with debt they cannot afford and no degree or credential to show for it. It ensures that owners of for-profit colleges can be required to meet specified conditions through the Program Participation Agreement – the federal contract colleges and universities sign in order to receive federal aid. By creating a new metric of instructional spending, it sets out a new way of differentiating the outcomes of schools that are under resourced from schools that simply churn taxpayer aid into corporate profits and payouts. And finally, the bill restores and streamlines the rights of students who were lied to or defrauded by creating a clear and simple path for students to establish a defense to repayment.

H.R. 1 unfortunately made it harder for students and student veterans to establish that they have been defrauded – that is a deeply unfortunate consequence since ensuring students can establish

they were lied to has served as a tremendous disincentive to misconduct by predatory schools. The PROTECT Students Act would fix this. In order to safeguard the future of our younger generations, we need consider this legislation immediately.

Equally important is ensuring a strong economic future for America's workforce. This country is long overdue for robust reform of the overtime threshold, which remains at a woefully low and inadequate \$35,500 per year. The first Trump Administration set this threshold, despite \$35,500 being far below a livable wage in any state in the United States. It has remained there for far too long.

I am proud to lead the Restoring Overtime Pay Act, a bill which seeks to raise the overtime threshold to a historic high of the 55th percentile of earnings for full-time salaried workers nationwide.

This effort paves the way for millions of American workers previously excluded from overtime compensation to receive overtime pay for their hours worked.

It will strengthen the economy, increase workers' spending power, and take a significant step towards ensuring that the American economy works for *all* workers, not just those in the highest earning brackets.

We need to focus our time on putting money back in workers' pockets, and I urge the Committee to take up this bill as soon as possible.

Finally, I ask that this Committee demand explanations from Secretary of Education Linda McMahon and the Trump Administration on their decision making regarding the elimination of Minority Serving Institution (MSI) programs. Secretary McMahon must work with Congress regarding any major action on these programs, and she and the Administration have overstepped their authority by moving forward without engaging the legislative branch.

The Department of Education announced it would cancel and reallocate funding for several MSI programs, including Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) and Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions (AANAPISI). MSIs are colleges and universities that enroll some of the most racially and ethnically diverse students across the United States. The Department of Education has provided funding to help colleges design and build programs to ensure their students are equipped to enter the workforce. These include programs that educate and prepare students in artificial intelligence and strengthen research capabilities.

In the State of California, there are 54 HSI, 12 MSI, and 12 AANAPISI active grant recipients. If funding is completely reallocated, California colleges and universities could lose upwards of \$50 million over the next several years. Eliminating these programs would hinder the efforts made by colleges and universities to prepare students to succeed in the evolving job market. With budgets already tight, some established programs would be difficult to replace with state funds because state dollars are primarily formula-driven and already committed to core operations and state priorities.

Secretary McMahon must agree to discuss this decision—among others—with Congress before proceeding. This will impact millions of students' ability to succeed and erode decades of progress towards making higher education more accessible and equitable.

Chairman Walberg, Ranking Member Scott, and Members of the Committee, thank you for your time and leadership. I look forward to working with you all.