



## **Chairman Tom Cole**

---

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

### **Budget Hearing of the Secretary of Education**

**March 22, 2016**

### **Opening Statement As Prepared**

---

Good morning, Mister Secretary. It is my pleasure to welcome you on your first visit to the House Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, and Education to present your budget request for fiscal year 2017 for the Department of Education. We are looking forward to hearing your testimony.

Since the Subcommittee last met to discuss the Department of Education budget last year, Congress achieved the significant and long-overdue accomplishment of reauthorizing Federal K-12 education programs through the Every Student Succeeds Act. This legislation streamlined and improved many of the Department's programs and devolved much of the authority over K-12 education issues to States and school districts.

The next step is to support States and school districts in their new role by providing sufficient resources to help them build capacity. I have concerns about whether your budget request for fiscal year 2017 for the key formula and block grant programs that support all states and school districts—including IDEA, Title I, and the new Student Support and Academic Enrichment State Grant—is sufficient to successfully implement the new law.

With regard to higher education, the Department plays an important role in not only assisting students to finance higher education, but also in helping them to prepare for, complete, and succeed in their studies. I was happy that we were able to maintain funding for Pell Grants and provide a significant increase for TRIO and GEAR UP in fiscal year 2016. I look forward to hearing more about your proposals to make higher education more attainable and affordable to students most in need in the upcoming fiscal year.

I look forward to having a discussion with you this morning to identify your top priorities for the year, so that we can invest American taxpayer dollars in the wisest way given our funding constraints.

As a reminder to the subcommittee and our witness, we will abide by the five minute rule so that everyone will have a chance to get their questions asked and answered.

I would like to yield now to the Ranking Member, the Gentlelady from New York, for her opening remarks.

#####