

Congress of the United States
Washington, D.C. 20510

December 2, 2025

The Honorable Linda E. McMahon
Secretary of Education
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Ave, SW
Washington, D.C. 20202

Dear Secretary McMahon:

We write today in opposition to the Department of Education's (the Department) decision to end several discretionary grant programs for Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs). These grant programs help provide programming and support specifically for students of color and lower-income students. Ending these programs will have widespread detrimental effects on students from all states and backgrounds.

As you know, Titles III and V of the *Higher Education Act* authorize grant programs for MSIs. To be eligible for funding, schools must serve a certain percentage of minority students within their designation. In addition, 50 percent of all students enrolled must receive some form of need-based assistance, and a substantial percentage of students must receive a Pell Grant. However, MSIs serve a broad range of students for whom a college degree is often out of reach, like first-generation college-goers, English language learners, parents, and transfer students, as well as students in rural communities. There are roughly 800 MSIs in the United States, including 14 Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs) and 1 Native American-Serving Nontribal Institution in Colorado. Funds from these programs support vital activities, including academic support services, science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education, and helping prepare students for the workforce.

MSIs, and specifically HSIs, have a proven track record of success when it comes to setting up graduates for economic security and success. HSIs are especially effective at providing social mobility for students from low-income families. In 2023, eight of the top 10 colleges in the Social Mobility Index rankings were HSIs.

We have heard strong concerns from Colorado colleges and universities that have received termination notices from the Department. The loss of millions of dollars will mean fewer opportunities for students and will only cause harm to the communities these institutions serve. As one university president wrote to us: "The loss of this support will have immediate and far-reaching effects on our ability to provide equitable access, persistence, and completion opportunities in one of Colorado's most rural regions." Schools and universities understood they would receive these grants and had made plans to allocate these funds. Can the Department commit to working with these institutions to ensure that they receive other federal funds to compensate for this loss?

To the extent the Department is working to reenvision these programs, we ask you to please provide, in detail, how the Department plans to reallocate these funds to ensure students still

Congress of the United States
Washington, D.C. 20510

receive the support they need. We respectfully request a written response to this letter within 30 days.

We must ensure that our education system can provide the opportunity for every American student to thrive, and we stand ready to work with you to achieve this goal.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. We look forward to hearing the Department's response.

Sincerely,



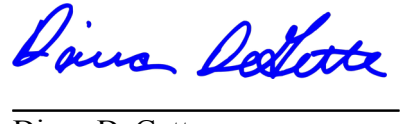
Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator



John Hickenlooper
United States Senator



Brittany Pettersen
Member of Congress



Diana DeGette
Member of Congress



Joe Neguse
Member of Congress



Jason Crow
Member of Congress