

February 12, 2025

The Honorable Bill Cassidy, M.D.  
Chair  
Senate Committee on Health, Education,  
Labor and Pensions  
428 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Bernie Sanders  
Ranking Member  
Senate Committee on Health, Education,  
Labor and Pensions  
428 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Cassidy, Ranking Member Sanders, and Members of the Committee:

We, the undersigned organizations, write to express our firm opposition to the advancement of Linda McMahon's nomination to be U.S. Secretary of Education. Her alignment with the Trump administration's Project 2025 agenda—a radical effort to dismantle public education, gut civil rights protections, and divert public resources away from students and working families—makes her unfit to serve in this critical role.

As the guarantor of civil rights, the federal government has a fundamental responsibility to ensure that all students — regardless of their race, income, disability, gender identity, or zip code — have access to a high-quality public education that prepares them for college, career, and life. This is not just a legal and moral imperative: it is essential to our nation's economic strength, democratic stability, and global competitiveness.

McMahon's nomination represents a direct and urgent threat to this mission. As Chair of the Board for the America First Policy Institute, she has supported policies that undermine public schools and strip students—especially those from underserved communities—of the resources and opportunities they need to succeed. If confirmed, McMahon would be positioned to execute President Trump's agenda of destruction, exclusion, and intolerance by:

- **Dismantling the U.S. Department of Education:** Eliminating the Department would remove the primary federal safeguard that protects students' civil rights and ensures that all students, regardless of income, race, disability, immigration status, and more, are provided access to a high-quality and inclusive public education. In addition, the Department provides \$79 billion in critical education investments ranging from funding for academic support for disadvantaged students to funding for special education to funding for career and technical education to the Pell grants and student loans that make college accessible to millions of Americans. Jeopardizing these funding streams for a radical agenda would greatly harm students and communities nationwide.
- **Privatizing Public School Dollars:** The irresponsible policies that the nominee has endorsed would prioritize private schools that pick and choose which students to serve—often discriminating against students with disabilities, English learners, and LGBTQ+ youth, and leaving out the vast majority of students across America—over the public schools that are the cornerstone of our communities, economy, and democracy. The Trump administration's push to privatize education through unregulated voucher

programs would funnel much-needed public dollars away from our public schools at a moment of educational crisis and need for recovery following the pandemic and into private schools that serve only about 10% of America's students.

- **Making College Less Affordable:** Proposals to privatize the student loan system and dismantle loan forgiveness programs would make it harder for millions of borrowers—especially Black, Latino, and low-income students—to not only access and complete higher education, but also to not be saddled with a lifetime of crushing debt. These proposals will ultimately widen the racial wealth gap and limit economic mobility.

Education is the gateway to opportunity, and the Trump administration's effort to shutter that gateway for millions of students is an attack on our nation's future. Weakening public education does not strengthen freedom—it restricts it, ensuring that only those with wealth and privilege can access the resources and knowledge needed to succeed. We must reject this agenda and instead reaffirm our commitment to a strong public education system that benefits all of us by preparing the next generation of leaders, workers, and engaged citizens.

For these reasons, we urge you to reject advancing Linda McMahon's nomination as U.S. Secretary of Education to the full Senate and instead support a leader who will uphold the Department's mission: to advance educational opportunity, protect civil rights, and invest in every student's success.

Sincerely,

All4Ed  
Center for American Progress  
Diverse Charter Schools Coalition  
EdTrust  
Education Leaders of Color (EdLoC)

Educators for Excellence  
Healthy Schools Campaign  
National Charter Collaborative  
National Parents Union  
The Pre-K-12 Education Team at  
The Century Foundation