

October 19, 2018

The Honorable Lamar Alexander
United States Senate
455 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Virginia Foxx
U.S. House of Representatives
2262 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Patty Murray
United States Senate
154 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Robert "Bobby" Scott
U.S. House of Representatives
1201 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Alexander, Chairwoman Foxx, Ranking Member Murray and Ranking Member Scott,

We, the undersigned advocates in veterans' education, are writing in response to recent actions taken by the Department of Education against the interests of Student Veterans.

On Friday, September 28, the Department of Education (ED) independently disabled key data collection and removed national medians from the College Scorecard. Not only did ED do this without inviting public comment, or consulting Veterans' Affairs (VA), the Department of Defense (DOD), or the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB)—there is also no evidence that ED attempted any due diligence to test how their sudden changes to the College Scorecard would affect these agencies and Student Veterans nationwide.

Without national medians, Student Veterans are not able to make informed decisions about institutions, nor wisely set goals for their higher education. Having mere data without a touchstone makes it almost impossible for Student Veterans to know if an institution's net cost, graduation rate, average post-graduation income, and loan repayment rates are excellent or mediocre. Being able to compare one school to another school does not solve this problem, again, because the touchstone of a national median has been taken away from the data. This cripples Student Veterans in their endeavors to make informed and wise choices about the future of their education and for the wellbeing of their families.

Furthermore, ED's decision to do away with national medians meant the cessation of invaluable data employed by VA, DOD, and CFPB in their Veteran aid tools. Upon the Department's update to the College Scorecard, all of their tools became obsolete or unable to operate. The Department appears to be unconcerned by this, being unwilling to provide this necessary data and its proven methodology, which is unacceptable. These agencies have urgently patched their online tools, but are unable to continue to update their data, meaning all posted medians and averages will remain obsolete and, therefore, meaningless and misleading.

We urge the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions, and the Committee on Education and Workforce to insist that the Department of Education reinstate national medians on the College Scorecard, and to continue collecting and providing the data upon which the VA, DOD, and CFPB tools depend, for the sake of our Student Veterans and all students of our nation.



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