

April 9, 2024

The Honorable Secretary Miguel Cardona
Secretary of Education
400 Maryland Ave SW
Washington, D.C. 20202

Dear Secretary Cardona,

As the Executive Director of the Veterans Education Project (VEP), I write today with concerns over the negotiated rule-making committee selection process, which has a significant impact on Student Veterans. We request your commitment to ensuring that upcoming Department of Education negotiated rule-making committees encompass representation from a diverse range of Veteran organizations, reflecting a myriad of interests, opinions and perspectives.

While VEP representatives consistently seize the opportunity to participate in public comment periods during relevant negotiated rule-making hearings, we are increasingly concerned by the lack of different voices and perspectives selected to represent the interests of Student Veterans on rule-making committees. These concerns are exacerbated by the repeated selection of a single individual to fulfill this role.

This [letter](#) sent to you on February 23rd by National Defense Committee (NDC) Committee Executive Director, Bob Carey, demonstrates how your staff has repeatedly relied on one organization – Veterans Education Success (VES) – to represent the voice of all Veterans, serving on no less than four recent negotiated rule-making committees. Furthermore, VES' participation should be questioned in light of their representative's bias and their unethical behavior proven by a 2022 Department of Veteran's Affairs Office of Inspector General report (both claims confirmed by the aforementioned NDC letter).

Student Veterans need and deserve to have trust and confidence in the processes that impacts the educational benefits they earned, and those selected to represent their interests. There is no shortage of individual Veterans, groups and organizations that would be honored to advocate for their fellow Veterans on negotiated rule-making committees, and the repeated selection of the same individual disrupts confidence in the negotiated rule-making process and the overall integrity of its outcomes.

For these reasons, we urge you to commit to ceasing the repeated selection of the same participant and instead select a variety of Veteran representatives moving forward.

Sincerely,



Stephen Patterson
Executive Director
Veterans Education Project