

**Opening Statement of Ranking Member Robert C. "Bobby" Scott (VA-03)**

*"Breaking Trust: Attacks on Parental Rights, Inappropriate Content, and Legal Abuses in America's Schools"*

Full Committee Hearing

2176 Rayburn House Office Building

Wednesday, June 10, 2026 | 10:15 a.m.

---

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you to our witnesses for joining us today.

Mr. Chairman, in education, today's students, families, and teachers are confronting challenges that go beyond prom or the science fair. Schools across the country are grappling with gun violence, ICE raids, learning loss, the rise of artificial intelligence, and the affordability crisis that is placing enormous strain on our communities. These are real, material concerns that demand action from Congress.

That is why I am disappointed that the Majority has once again decided to ignore the concerns of parents and instead focus on divisive culture wars with the hope of scoring a few cheap political points. This is part and parcel of the Trump Administration and Congressional Republicans' track record of putting political games before proper governance and using divisive, hateful rhetoric to distract from their attacks on public education.

The federal government's responsibility in education is to ensure that all students have access to a quality, safe, and inclusive learning environment. That is our mandate – not debating whether or not teachers can teach about world religions or Black history.

Yet, the Trump Administration is actively dismantling the Department of Education, leaving schools without [the] research, guidance, and resources that they need. The Office for Civil Rights (OCR) has been decimated, and a GAO investigation found that the Administration wasted \$38 million paying investigators not to work. Even more shocking, according to the Senate HELP Committee staff report, OCR reached zero resolution agreements in the calendar year 2025 involving sexual harassment, sexual violence, seclusion or restraint violations of students with learning or behavioral issues, racial harassment, or discriminatory school discipline. The students who have experienced discrimination deserve a federal government that can investigate that claim and uphold their rights. By charging forward with a plan to dismantle the Department of Education, the Trump Administration is undermining our ability to protect students and their civil rights.

Earlier this morning, the Department of Education released long-term trend scores from the National Assessment of Educational Progress. The data confirmed that today's students need more support. Long-term math scores have fallen to their lowest levels in a decade. That is just not a failure of students, teachers, or schools – it is a failure of policy.

When students are falling behind, it is the federal government's responsibility to provide evidence-based research that states and districts can use to understand the gaps, challenges, and efficacy of the science of learning. That includes examining and assessing how students can learn and prepare for a future shaped by artificial intelligence.

Mr. Chairman, this is precisely why the work that is done at the Institute of Educational Sciences is so important. Incredibly, the Trump Administration has all but shuttered the Institute of Educational Sciences, hamstringing the ability to understand the greatest educational needs and the tools needed to address them. It is irresponsible and short-sighted to leave states and localities to fend for themselves, especially when many school jurisdictions are already strapped for resources and funding. And it cannot be left unsaid that the Republicans' "Big, Ugly Bill" only exacerbated the educational challenges facing this nation.

Parents don't care about what nicknames teachers use or about what rainbows may be in the classroom. Recent polling from the National Parents Union (NPU) revealed that while parents are optimistic about things happening in their children's classrooms, they are deeply concerned about the failures of the Trump Administration. In fact, over 50 percent of parents gave Secretary McMahon a "C" or lower. Mr. Chairman, I ask to enter NPU's press release, entitled "New National Poll: Parents Flunk Trump on Education" into the record.

The takeaway from the National Parents Union poll is that politicization of education does nothing to boost student outcomes. Worse, cultural divisiveness fuels bullying and discrimination, and it does nothing to provide resources and stability for schools in need.

While my colleagues are focused on playing politics, Democrats are doing the work to advance policies that would fix crumbling schools, fund evidence-based policies that will improve student outcomes, protect every child from discrimination, and ensure no parent has to fear for their child's safety when the school bus pulls away.

I hope my colleagues across the aisle can realign their priorities and work with us to make these goals happen. It is time to work together with schools, families, and teachers to make these dreams a reality.

Before I yield back, Mr. Chairman, I want to read a letter from members of the Loudon County Community to you and me, dated May 26.

*"We, the undersigned educators, parents, community members, and organizations in Loudoun County, are writing in support of the inclusive policies, initiatives, and community that has been created in Loudoun County Public Schools (LCPS) under the leadership of Dr. Aaron Spence.*

*"Dr. Spence has been a critical part of ensuring that Loudoun County is a desirable place to live and raise a family. Strong and inclusive public schools are not just an essential public good, but also the foundation of a strong community. Dr. Spence is not just an administrator, but the parent of two LCPS students himself. Dr. Spence not only understands the community, but understands that education requires collaboration between students, their parents, their teachers, and school staff to ensure student success.*

*"As community members, we take issue with the premise that trust is broken in America's public schools. Academic success and the thriving school system in Loudoun do not happen by accident. The success is due to the cultivation of trust and acceptance that teachers foster every day in their classrooms. The success is due to the relationships educators build with parents with the common goal of seeing our students succeed. The continuation of this success is because we, as a community, have not let the bigotry and fearmongering of a few be louder than the love and acceptance that we can show children in our community. Promoting an environment of equality and decency, where everyone is respected and treated with dignity, harms no one.*

*"We join this statement in full support of the inclusive school environment fostered in Loudoun County by Dr. Spence. Every student-especially our students of color, our transgender and gender-expansive students, our immigrant students, and our students with disabilities-deserve a safe place to learn where they can grow and thrive. We will continue to work tirelessly to ensure that our community reflects the best that America has to offer when every child has the chance to succeed."*

I'm not going to comment on what you said, but in response to public comments by the House Committee on Education and Workforce Chair, the county school board says:

*“The Loudoun County School Board is deeply concerned by recent public comments made by the Chairman of the House Education and Workforce Committee that call into question the work of Loudoun County Public Schools ahead of Superintendent Dr. Aaron Spence’s testimony before the committee. These remarks do not reflect the reality in our schools and risk undermining the important work taking place each day in support of students, staff, and families across the division.*

*“The Board finds the comments regarding Dr. Spence’s leadership to be without merit, and we also believe it is important to emphasize the broader impact of these accusations at such a critical moment. As Dr. Spence prepares to represent our community before Congress, these statements distract from the substantive issues facing public education, its mission, and the invested parties it serves. We find the timing and nature of these remarks particularly unfortunate at a juncture when focused, constructive dialogue would better serve students and families.*

*“The Board has full confidence in Dr. Spence’s leadership and stands behind him in advance of his testimony. He continues to lead with a focus on academic excellence, student well-being, and ensuring that every student feels welcomed, valued, and supported in our schools.”*

I would ask that both of these statements be placed in the record. I yield back.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I yield back.