

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

Full Committee Hearing

*"Antisemitism in Higher Education: Examining the Role of Faculty, Funding, and Ideology"*

Tuesday, July 15, 2025 | 10:15 a.m.

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Thank you, our witnesses, for being with us today.

Let me begin by acknowledging the seriousness of today's hearing topic. Combating antisemitism, like all forms of hatred and bigotry, must be a moral and civic priority. But I would be remiss if I did not point out that this is our ninth hearing on antisemitism in 18 months.

I will also note that since this Committee's first antisemitism hearing in December 2023, we have not held a single hearing addressing racism, xenophobia, sexism, Islamophobia, or other challenges affecting other student groups on America's college campuses. I have witnessed this Committee's silence on this Administration's wholesale attack on diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) initiatives designed to make campuses more welcoming to all groups. If we are serious about addressing antisemitism and other forms of hate on college campuses, the best process for enforcement we could use is the enforcement of Title VI of the *Civil Rights Act*, enforced by the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) in the Department of Education (ED). Yet, this Committee's majority has said nothing about the wholesale firings attacking the Office for Civil Rights.

And while this Committee is engaged in yet another round of this type of hearing, critical issues affecting public education in this country and the viability of institutions of higher education have been ignored. For example, in the last six months, our Administration has taken harmful steps in the area of education. Specifically, nearly 50 percent of the Department's workforce has been proposed to be fired, thus threatening the key role the Department plays in keeping our nation's schools running and our students' access to a safe learning, welcoming learning environment.

And yesterday, the Supreme Court's majority green-lighted this fatal blow by permitting the Department of Education to proceed with its planned firing of employees who manage student loans, collect data, study learning trends, and an element to this hearing, enforce the civil rights protections of students. And yesterday evening, President Trump announced on his social media platform that, based on the Supreme Court decision, the Secretary of Education should proceed with the dismantling of the Department of Education. And we are seeing the impact of this action. The Department is requiring many students with loans to change their student loan plan, but those students are unable to do so due to inadequate staff at the Department of Education, while, at the same time, more people are being fired.

Another area this Committee has not held a hearing on is the impact of the stripping of critical federal funding on the integrity of higher education institutions and their contributions to science, medicine, and global competition.

This Committee has also not examined how the recently enacted reconciliation law – or as Democrats call it the “Big Ugly Law” – will impact student loan borrowers. This law will raise costs for students seeking higher education by:

- Forcing student loan borrowers into unaffordable repayment plans.
- Eliminating resources to help struggling borrowers.
- Pushing students into the predatory, private loan market by eliminating Graduate PLUS loans, capping Parent PLUS loans, and limiting Pell Grant access.

Further, that law exposes students to predatory, for-profit institutions by stopping the implementation of:

- The 2023 Borrower Defense Regulation, which provides student loan relief for millions of borrowers defrauded by their schools.
- The 2023 Closed School Discharge Regulation, which provides student loan relief for students whose institutions closed before they completed their programs.

Also, on July 1<sup>st</sup>—with little warning and no justification—this Administration announced it was “pausing” nearly \$7 billion in education programs that the Administration initially proposed to eliminate in next year’s Fiscal Year 2026 budget.

Again, we have not had a hearing to examine the effect of the threat of loss of funding of the following programs:

- Title II-A funding program, supporting Effective Instruction State Grants, which support professional development and other activities to improve the effectiveness of teachers and school leaders, including reducing class size;
- Title III-A English Language Acquisition program, which supports language instruction to help English language learners become proficient in English;
- Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants (Title IV-A), which provide flexible funding for school districts for a wide range of activities, including supporting STEM education, accelerated learning courses, college and career counseling, school-based mental health services, and improving school technology, among many others;
- And another Title IV program, (Title IV-B), 21st Century Community Learning Centers which support high-quality before and after-school programs focused on providing academic enrichment opportunities for students;
- (Title I-C) Migrant Education, which supports the educational needs of migratory children, including children of migrant and seasonal farmworkers; and
- Adult Basic and Literacy Education State Grants (including Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education State Grants), which support adult education and literacy programs to provide the basic skills to help prepare adults and out-of-school youth for success in the workforce.

All of these programs are at risk of abrupt loss in funding. In response, a number of State Attorneys General filed an emergency lawsuit just yesterday. However, cash-strapped school districts, particularly those in low-income and rural areas, cannot afford the delay in funding and will likely be forced to either lay off staff or cut back on programs and services.

We should be having hearings to support and strengthen our learning institutions. We should insist that the Department of Education not abdicate its responsibility to ensure that all students are afforded safe, quality, and equitable education, regardless of their race, gender, immigration status, socioeconomic status, religion, or disability status. We should call in the Office for Civil Rights at the Department of Education to testify and ensure that they are implementing their long-standing duties to investigate, monitor, and provide resources to victims of potential civil rights violations, and that they are enforcing the laws that fight antisemitism.

So, Mr. Chairman, as we conduct this ninth hearing on this issue, I urge you to focus some of your attention to those who have a responsibility to protect students from hate and discrimination. The Office of Civil Rights or whatever, or whatever of it is left, and the pressing issue facing college students today.

With that, I yield back the balance of my time.