

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

Full Committee Markup

H.R. 9607, *Less Bureaucracy, Better Workforce Development Act*

H.R. 9609, *Less Bureaucracy, Better Student Aid Act*

H.R. 9602, *Less Bureaucracy, Better International Foreign Gift Transparency Act*

H.R. 9603, *Less Bureaucracy, Better International Education Oversight Act*

H.R. 9605, *Less Bureaucracy, Better Foreign Medical Accreditation Act*

H.R. 9606, *Less Bureaucracy, Better Child Care for Student Parents Act*

H.R. 9611, *Less Bureaucracy, Better Higher Education Act*

H.R. 9610, *Less Bureaucracy, Better K-12 Education Act*

H.R. 9608, *Less Bureaucracy, Better Family Engagement Act*

H.R. 9604, *Less Bureaucracy, Better Tribal Education Act*

2175 Rayburn House Office Building

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

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Today, we will consider legislation that will effectively codify 10 of the Department of Education's 14 interagency agreements (IAAs). If these bills were to be adopted, it would result in the permanent transfer of the Department of Education's core responsibilities to other federal agencies.

More specifically, these bills will transfer the administration of formula and competitive grant programs, staff from programs and offices, and all associated assets, liabilities, properties, and records to the Departments of Labor, Treasury, State, Interior, and Health and Human Services.

Mr. Chairman, it must be emphasized that none of those other departments have anywhere close to the same expertise in serving students or administering education programs as the Department of Education. Overall, these proposals would move or eliminate programs within the Offices of Elementary and Secondary Education, Postsecondary Education, Indian Education, Career, Technical and Adult Education, and the Federal Student Aid Office.

Mr. Chairman, it is difficult to articulate how impractical these proposals are, to say nothing of the pain and suffering they will inflict on students, educators, and their communities if they were to become law. So, whatever you say about the "problems" at the Department of Education, these bills will only make things worse.

First, I have to admit that I do not understand the intent in codifying the Department of Education's existing IAAs. Are you conceding that the existing IAAs are illegal, and therefore only an Act of Congress can dismantle the Department of Education? And if they are not illegal, then why are these bills necessary? In fact, how will these bills codifying what is already [happening going to improve anything]? What is the purpose of today's markup?

And second, my colleagues stated the objective for dismantling the Department of Education is to “return education to the states.” Now, aside from the catchy and misleading slogan, nothing in these proposals grants additional authority or resources to states or localities. So, there is nothing in here to talk about “returning education to the states” — you’re just moving people around Washington, D.C.

Rather, these proposals will actually *contribute* to the creation of miles of bureaucratic red tape, inconsistent education policy and enforcement across the federal government, and a significant waste of the taxpayers’ money. As a result, these bills will lead to chaos and confusion for students, families, and local and state education agencies. And ironically, dismantling the Department of Education will make it more difficult for states and localities to administer education programs.

The *Department of Education Organization Act* explicitly stated that the Department was created because the “dispersion of education programs across a large number of federal agencies ha[d] led to fragmented, duplicative, and often inconsistent federal policies relating to education.” So far, the IAAs have replicated this problem, resulting in inconsistent enforcement of federal education policy that the Department was created to solve.

For example, we have heard from numerous stakeholders about the problems they have experienced following the transfer of career, technical, and adult education programs to the Department of Labor (DOL). Several states have reported they are still unable to access their authorized funds through DOL’s disbursement system. States went from having one place to draw down their funds and receive communications to a process where they have to navigate multiple systems. States have also been denied access to their funds for arbitrary reasons, such as the wrong ink color or abbreviating their state’s name. Rather than easing administrative burdens and improving coordination between education and workforce systems, these disruptions make the work for states and schools more burdensome.

Another example, my colleagues are proposing to transfer the Office of Federal Student Aid, which is responsible for the \$1.7 trillion federal student loan portfolio, to the Department of the Treasury. This is particularly shocking given the Treasury has not yet been able to effectuate the April 2026 IAA and begin collections from defaulted student loan borrowers. And that IAA entails just a fraction of what my colleagues are looking into today by moving the entire office to Treasury.

Last month, it was reported that Treasury had to rescind student loan work valued at tens of millions of dollars assigned to five debt collection companies, including one previously accused of mistreating student borrowers. Now Treasury must secure *another* contractor and does not expect to have the contracted staff needed to support default resolutions until the end of 2026, at the earliest. And what does the Department of Treasury know about which colleges and which programs within a college are even eligible for student loans, or when a student might be eligible for a discharge of his loan, by completion of the requirements of Public Service Loan Forgiveness or fraud by a college? These programs have been administered by the Department of Education for years, and now you’ve got an agency that hasn’t dealt with that.

These are just a handful of examples of the problems with the illegal IAAs, which the Department of Education often refers to as a “proof of concept.” If anything, the efforts to dismantle the Department of Education are proof that the Trump Administration and Congressional Republicans would rather prioritize fulfilling a campaign promise, even in the face of mounting evidence that doing so would be disastrous for students, educators, and their communities.

Lastly, I would like to address which IAAs we are not codifying. Today, we are not considering the transfer of the Office for Civil Rights or the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services. Perhaps that’s because even my colleagues recognize how politically unpalatable such transfers would be. A core function of the Department of Education is to protect and defend students’ civil rights. The federal government must retain its central role in enforcing students’ civil rights because, historically, when the states operated without federal

oversight, we saw such things as unchecked segregation in public schools, a refusal to educate students with disabilities, and a lack of resources for low-income communities. That's what happens when you "return education to the states" without federal oversight.

In conclusion, my colleagues are not simply proposing to pay for the expenses of moving a few people around different buildings in Washington, D.C. No, these proposals would represent the abdication of the federal government's responsibility to ensure that all students, regardless of race, religion, disability, income, or zip code, have access to a quality public education.

So, I oppose all ten of these bills and encourage my colleagues to do the same.

Before I yield back, Mr. Chairman, I would like unanimous consent to enter into the record a [letter](#) from 93 education, civil rights, and disability organizations in opposition to the legislation to provide cover for the Administration's illegal dismantling of the Department of Education. I yield back.