

Vote “NO” on Republicans’ Bill that Threatens Future of Higher Education

Republicans are simultaneously trying to dismantle ED and increase ED’s responsibilities.

Background

Section 117 of the *Higher Education Act* requires the Department of Education (ED) to collect and make publicly available certain information about foreign gifts and contracts involving institutions of higher education. Section 117 protects government-funded activities from undue foreign influence, such as intellectual property theft and conflicts of interest.

The Problem

On March 20, 2025, President Trump signed an executive order to dismantle ED. Now, Republicans want to increase ED’s responsibilities and threaten institutions’ financial futures if they do not meet new onerous reporting requirements.

The [*Defending Education Transparency and Ending Rogue Regimes Engaging in Nefarious Transactions \(DETERRENT\) Act*](#) (H.R. 1048) adds new and onerous reporting requirements under Section 117 that will make it nearly impossible for colleges and universities to be transparent about their partnerships with other countries. For example, faculty must report certain gifts and contracts from any representative of a “country of concern” – regardless of whether it pertains to their job duties or personal life. This information is then shared in a public database, regardless of whether the action was nefarious. This is so excessive and burdensome—to say nothing of the potential discriminatory effect—it would disincentivize universities from complying with Section 117 and conducting vital global research.

Universities are already bracing for impending federal spending cuts, and if passed, the *DETERRENT Act* would stall decades of innovative progress and jeopardize global research initiatives. Students and faculty are calling on Congress to improve our higher education system, restore critical research funding, and address campus discrimination. Specific provisions in this bill would exacerbate the ongoing culture wars that have consumed Republican politicians. For example, the legislation singles out partnerships with certain countries, targeting researchers based solely on their nationality.

Don’t just take our word for it. Here are what experts and industry leaders have [said](#) about the *DETERRENT Act*.

[The Solution](#)

Collaborating with global partners helps drive intellectual and campus diversity, strengthens our economy, and gives us an undeniable competitive edge. We can—and must—take targeted, evidence-based steps to protect our research and development initiatives without jeopardizing global partnerships.

The [Democratic substitute](#) builds on the *CHIPS and Science Act* and the *Biden Administration’s work to streamline reporting across agencies*. Specifically, it aligns reporting requirements with other federal agencies and requires the Secretary of Education to go through negotiated rulemaking to gain feedback on key implementation aspects of Section 117.