

DeVos Testifies during Education Secretary Confirmation Hearings

By Don Sutherland

On January 17, 2017, Education Secretary nominee, Betsy DeVos, testified before the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions. Most of her testimony was devoted to primary and secondary education. However, she touched on a few issues concerning Higher Education: Rising tuition, student debt, and alternative post-secondary options. The third point could entail the largest consequences for Higher Education.

The following are relevant excerpts from her [opening statement](#):

Escalating tuition is pricing aspiring and talented students out of college. Others are burdened with debts that will take years – or even decades --to pay off.

There is no magic wand to make the debt go away, but we do need to take action. It would be a mistake to shift that burden to struggling taxpayers without first addressing why tuition has gotten so high.

For starters, we need to embrace new pathways of learning. For too long a college degree has been pushed as the only avenue for a better life.

The old and expensive brick-mortar-and-ivy model is not the only one that will lead to a prosperous future. Craftsmanship is not a fallback -but a noble pursuit.

Students should make informed choices about what type of education they want to pursue post high school and have access to high quality options. President-elect Trump and I agree we need to support all post-secondary avenues, including trade and vocational schools, and community colleges.

Of course, on every one of these issues, Congress will play a vital role.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with you to enact solutions that empower parents and students, provide high quality options and spend tax dollars wisely...

And I look forward to working with Congress and all stakeholders to reauthorize the Higher Education Act to meet the needs of today's college students.