



To: Distance Learning and Educational Innovation Subcommittee

From: Jessica Ranucci, New York Legal Assistance Group, Representing Legal Assistance Organizations that Represent Students

Date: February 5, 2019

Re: Statement to Main Committee on Scope of Rulemaking

Background:

At the first meeting, many members of the subcommittee repeatedly expressed concern that in this rulemaking the Department is proposing to lower barriers to entry for new accreditors while simultaneously proposing to defer certain oversight responsibilities to accreditors and, in some instances, removing federal oversight entirely. I believe this concern has permeated the work of our subcommittee and I want to make sure that we clearly express it to the main committee.

Proposal:

I propose that we agree on a written statement to the main committee that encapsulates this concern. I have drafted proposed language here as a starting point for discussion:

In this rulemaking the Department is proposing to lower long-standing entry requirements for new accreditors while simultaneously proposing to defer certain oversight responsibilities to accreditors. In some instances, the Department is proposing to remove federal oversight entirely. We are concerned that making these changes simultaneously could leave open the door to unscrupulous actors and harm students and taxpayers. We do not believe that these changes are necessary to allow innovation in higher education. We urge the main committee to consider the proposed changes to accreditation in tandem with the proposed changes to other areas of the regulations that rely on accreditors' oversight, in order to ensure the protection of students and taxpayers.