

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2101

November 20, 2015

The Honorable Arne Duncan
Secretary
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202

Dear Secretary Duncan:

We write on the heels of our letter of November 17, 2015, regarding the non-public interagency task force on for-profit postsecondary institutions, with an expectation of an in-person discussion with the leaders of this task force before the end of the year.

In addition to our letter requesting information about the mission and purpose of the task force, some of our staff received a briefing by Department of Education officials last week regarding the task force. During this briefing, our staff received few details and information about the task force and were led to believe that this task force was simply a mechanism for each member agency to provide information about its authorities and best practices. Staff were further told no one outside the agencies – either individuals or groups – have addressed, or were invited to address, the taskforce.

It has come to our attention, however, that the task force recently held a meeting with one of our Senate colleagues, specifically, Senator Durbin, to discuss his views on for-profit higher education. In fact, Senator Durbin has used social media to boast about his attendance at this recent meeting. As Chairmen of Senate Committees with direct interest in, and responsibility for, issues surrounding for-profit higher education in this country, we feel it is important that the task force hear our views on for-profit higher education. We expect to receive an invitation to address the leadership of the task force to discuss these views as well as the mission, goals, intentions and expected output of this group.

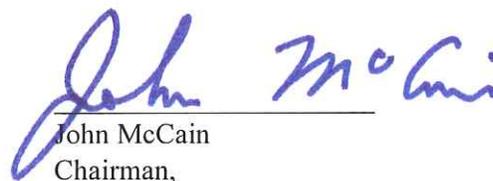
As Congressional leaders on these most critical issues, we are seeking clear and consistent oversight of all postsecondary institutions to ensure students and families are afforded a quality and accessible education. It is our understanding that this task force is comprised of at least eight federal agencies and will utilize staff and other resources of those agencies. It is our hope that these publicly-funded resources will be directed toward a fair and transparent review of issues facing for-profit and non-profit institutions, and not for a pre-conceived, political agenda to stir the pot of public perception. To do so otherwise would neither be productive nor benefit the public trust.

Please contact our staff, Robert Moran (Senator Alexander) at 202-224-6770 or David Cole (Senator McCain) at 202-224-2235 to schedule a time for us to meet with the task force.

Sincerely,



Lamar Alexander
Chairman,
Committee on Health, Education, Labor
and Pensions



John McCain
Chairman,
Committee on Armed Services