



Federal Policy Update **February 13, 2025**

On February 13, 2025 President Trump's Nominee for Secretary of Education, Linda McMahon, [appeared before the Senate](#) Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee for her confirmation hearing. Throughout the hearing she answered questions regarding her knowledge of the various education programs administered by the Department and attempted to assuage concerns regarding the Trump Administration's priorities to close the Department of Education ("ED" or "the Department"). Democrats attempted to highlight the impact that closing the Department would have on the many critical programs that it administers. When asked about these programs and the impact of closing the Department, she responded: "It's not the president's goal to defund the programs, only to have it [the Department] operate more efficiently." This answer perplexed several members of Congress who could not reconcile that with the President's statement just yesterday that he would like to "see [the Department] closed immediately." To help clarify, McMahon later said that she agreed closing the Department required Congressional approval and that instead, some programs administered by the Department might be reshuffled or re-organized. Her answers were unclear about whether certain programs would be financially impacted.

Republicans on the Committee focused most of their question-time making comments about objections to the Department's DEI efforts, rising antisemitism on campuses, and "shutting down the bureaucracy of the Department." Most Republicans expressed that they view her background as head of the Small Business Administration as a benefit to eliminating inefficiencies within the Department of Education. Democrats on the Committee continuously raised concerns about whether McMahon would implement education policies required by law like civil rights laws, whether she intends to call for deep cuts to critical education programs, and how she would protect students with disabilities and other underserved students.

The HELP Committee will vote on McMahon's confirmation on February 20th and it is very likely she will be confirmed by the Senate within the next few weeks.

Authored by Ally Talcott, Founding Partner, Allied for Progress, NSLA Policy Consultant