

**Congress of the United States**  
Washington, DC 20510

July 21, 2017

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

Dear Secretary DeVos:

We write to express our deep concern in response about Department of Education's (the Department) July 17, 2017 decision to deny the State of West Virginia's request for reconsideration of its provisional status and heightened cash monitoring. While we certainly recognize and share the Department's frustration over the late submission of West Virginia's 2016 statewide audit information, we urge you to reconsider your decision.

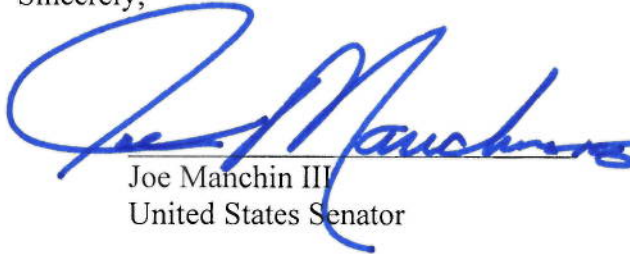
The people who will be harmed most by these sanctions are the low income students who rely on federal financial assistance to attend college. All of these students and their institutions will be critically impacted when the heightened cash monitoring delays the disbursement of federal funds to institutions. In fact, a delay in the disbursement of federal funds could result in institutions not being able to keep their lights on or make their payroll, which would disrupt services to students.

As you may be aware, West Virginia's higher education audit is submitted along with 150 other state agency audits as part of the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) through the State Department of Administration. As a result, the higher education piece of the statewide audit could not be filed with the Department until every single agency had submitted their documentation to the state government. Prior to the Department's March 30, 2017 deadline, the West Virginia Higher Policy Commission (WVHEPC) wrote the Department to explain why the submission would not be completed prior to the deadline despite the fact that the higher education institutions had submitted their information to the state government on time.

We stand in total agreement that the State of West Virginia needs to reform its auditing process to enable the timely submission of important information to the federal government. Governor Justice has pledged to address this problem going forward, but our students need your help now. The decision to impose sanctions will not harm those at fault for the late submission, but would instead harm low-income West Virginia students. The students are completely innocent and in most need of our help, which is why we implore the Department to reconsider its decision to place schools on a provisional status and heightened cash monitoring.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration. We hope that you will put the needs of West Virginia students above bureaucratic technicalities while the state works to correct past mistakes.

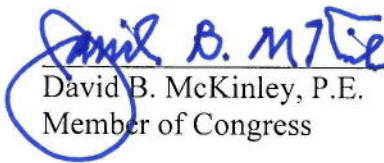
Sincerely,



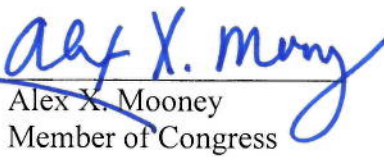
Joe Manchin III  
United States Senator



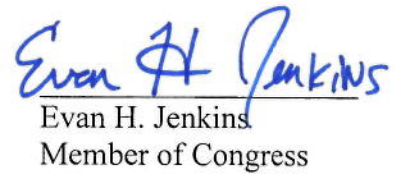
Shelley Moore Capito  
United States Senator



David B. McKinley, P.E.  
Member of Congress



Alex X. Mooney  
Member of Congress



Evan H. Jenkins  
Member of Congress