

**Post-Hearing Questions for the Record
Submitted to Ms. Linda McMahon**

**Nomination of Linda McMahon To be Secretary of Department of Education;
Thursday, February 14, 2025**

1. Do you support President Trump's calls for ED to be abolished? If so, why?

President Trump believes that the bureaucracy in Washington should be abolished so that we can return education to the states, where it belongs. I wholeheartedly support and agree with this mission.

2. Do you support President Trump's reported executive order that would direct the ED Secretary to "diminish" ED with the eventual goal of eliminating the agency?

President Trump believes that the bureaucracy in Washington should be abolished so that we can return education to the states, where it belongs. I wholeheartedly support and agree with this mission and will work with both the White House and Congress to achieve it.

- a. If you are confirmed and President Trump asks you to implement this executive order, what actions will you take to do so?

President Trump believes that the bureaucracy in Washington should be abolished so that we can return education to the states, where it belongs. I wholeheartedly support and agree with this mission and will work with both the White House and Congress to achieve it.

- b. If you are confirmed and President Trump asks you to implement this executive order, will you commit to not eliminating ED's role in:
 - i. Administering federal student aid, including Pell grants?

If I am confirmed, I commit to review all statutes, regulations, and student outcomes and to work with Congress to determine the best way to deliver federal student aid, including Pell grants, to the students.

- ii. Funding career and technical education?

If confirmed, I commit to review all statutes, regulations, and student outcomes and to work with Congress to determine the best way to deliver empower the states to deliver high quality career and technical education.

- iii. Funding Historically Black Colleges and Universities and/or Hispanic-Serving Institutions?

If confirmed, I commit to review all statutes, regulations, and student outcomes and to work with Congress to determine the best way to ensure that HBCUs continue to receive funds appropriated by Congress.

- iv. Protecting the civil rights of students?

If confirmed, I commit to review all statutes, regulations, and student outcomes and to work with Congress to determine the best way to protect the civil rights of all students.

- v. Funding programs that train teachers to better educate our nation's children?

If confirmed, I commit to review all statutes, regulations, and outcomes and to work with Congress to determine the best way to deliver teacher training funding to the states.

- vi. Monitoring federal student loan servicers?

If confirmed, I commit to review all statutes, regulations, and outcomes and working with Congress to determine the best way to monitor federal student loan servicers.

- vii. Sponsoring research to help policymakers and teachers improve our nation's education system?

If confirmed, I commit to review all statutes, regulations, and outcomes and to work with Congress to determine the best way to sponsor education research.

- 3. Do you support preserving and expanding ED's current funding in future years?

If confirmed, I commit to review all statutes, regulations, and student outcomes and working with Congress to determine the most appropriate level of federal education funding.

- a. If not, which of ED's services and programs do you believe should be cut, and how would these cuts affect students and families?

If confirmed, I commit to review all statutes, regulations, and student outcomes and to work with Congress to determine the most appropriate level of federal education funding.

- b. Are there currently ED programs that you believe are underfunded and in need of additional support from Congress or the Administration?

If confirmed, I commit to review all statutes, regulations, and student outcomes and to work with Congress to determine the most appropriate level of federal education funding.

4. Do you support the elimination of PSLF, as President Trump and Project 2025 have proposed?

I am not familiar with the details of Project 2025 or its proposals. If confirmed, I look forward to reviewing and assessing all programs and continuing to administer programs passed by Congress.

5. On January 27, 2025, President Trump's Office of Management and Budget (OMB) issued a memo calling for all federal financial assistance programs (excluding "assistance provided directly to individuals") to be suspended. The memo was rescinded two days later, after its implementation was halted by a federal judge.

- a. Did you agree with OMB's decision to issue this memo?

Every Administration has the right to review all funding obligations and ensure that funding is being distributed in a way that aligns with both Congressional intent and the priorities of the duly elected President of the United States.

- b. Do you believe that the ED Secretary has the legal authority to block the disbursement of funds appropriated by Congress?

Every Administration has the right to review all funding obligations and ensure that funding is being distributed in a way that aligns with both Congressional intent and the priorities of the duly elected President of the United States. The executive branch has a duty to taxpayers to prevent wasteful and fraudulent payments.

- c. Will you commit to not suspending or cutting federal funding appropriated by Congress for:

- i. Federal student aid?

I will follow the law.

- ii. Career and technical education programs?

I will follow the law.

- iii. Grant or loan programs for Historically Black Colleges and Universities and/or Hispanic-Serving Institutions?

I will follow the law.

- iv. Programs that serve students with disabilities?

I will follow the law.

- v. Programs that allocate funds to rural schools?

I will follow the law.

- vi. Programs that train teachers to better educate our nation's children?

I will follow the law.

- vii. Programs that fund foreign language education and study abroad programs?

I will follow the law.

- viii. Programs that allocate funds to colleges affected by natural disasters?

I will follow the law.

6. President Trump has granted Elon Musk's Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) unprecedented access to data systems across the federal government. Recent reporting suggests that DOGE staff have infiltrated ED's student loan database, which contains sensitive information for millions of borrowers.
 - a. Do you support the President's decision to grant DOGE staffers this unprecedented access to ED's data systems?

My understanding is that all DOGE employees are in full compliance with the law.

- b. Do you support any safeguards or restrictions on DOGE's access to federal government data systems, including ED's student loan data, FAFSA data, and other sensitive data administered by ED?

If I am confirmed, I commit to requiring full compliance with the law.

7. Do you support Project 2025's proposal to allow unaccredited colleges to receive federal funding?

I am not familiar with Project 2025. Accountability structures in higher education, including accreditation, are important to ensuring colleges and universities are delivering high ROI programs to students and families.

- a. If so, why do you believe this would be in the best interests of students?

8. Do you support Project 2025's proposal to fully privatize the student loan financing system?

I am not aware of Project 2025's proposals on higher education.

- a. If so, why do you believe this would be in the best interests of students and borrowers?

Accountability structures in higher education, including accreditation, are important to ensuring colleges and universities are delivering high ROI programs to students and families.

- b. Does the Department have the authority under current law to privatize any part of the student loan financing system? If so, would you attempt to do so?

The Department administers the federal student loan program, which provides assistance to millions of student and parent borrowers across the country. As a performance-based organization, Federal Student Aid works with private companies to effectively and efficiently carry out provisions of the law, such as the servicing and collection of loans, information technology support, etc. The loans are financed solely by taxpayers through the U.S. Department of Treasury.

9. Do you support Project 2025's proposal to replace all existing IDR plans with its one-size-fits-all plan?

I am not aware of Project 2025's proposals on higher education. Currently, the Department offers multiple repayment options to student borrowers who need help paying back their federal loans in a timely manner. But the number of repayment plans is confusing to students and parents and creates unnecessary barriers to higher education for low- and moderate-income students. I look forward to working with Congress to provide better options for borrowers to repay their federal student loans, including simplifying and streamlining the myriad of repayment plans that are confusing to students and their families.

- a. If so, why do you believe this would be in the best interests of students and borrowers?

I am not aware of Project 2025's proposals on higher education. Currently, the Department offers multiple repayment options to student borrowers who need help paying back their federal loans in a timely manner. But the number of repayment plans is confusing to students and parents and creates unnecessary barriers to higher education for low- and moderate-income students. I look forward to working with Congress to provide better options for borrowers to repay their federal student loans, including simplifying and streamlining the myriad of repayment plans that are confusing to students and their families.

- b. Does the Department have the executive authority to effectuate this proposal without additional congressional action? If so, would you attempt to do so?

I am not aware of Project 2025's proposals on higher education. Currently, the Department offers multiple repayment options to student borrowers who need help paying back their federal loans in a timely manner. But the number of repayment plans is confusing to students and parents and creates unnecessary barriers to higher education for low- and moderate-income students. I look forward to working with Congress to provide better options for borrowers to repay their federal student loans, including simplifying and streamlining the myriad of repayment plans that are confusing to students and their families.

10. Will you commit to preserving the Gainful Employment rule and enforcing the rule as written?

We need to look carefully at accountability in higher education across sectors to ensure that families are not going into debt to gain a credential that does not provide value in the marketplace. Recently, the Department extended the deadline for institutions to report data around FVT/GE because of software challenges, problems that arose when submitting previous data, and concerns about data integrity.

11. After Secretary DeVos left office, ED renewed its investigatory work into allegedly predatory for-profit colleges.

a. Will you commit to continuing any ongoing ED investigations into for-profit colleges?

I believe that all colleges and universities - regardless of tax status - should be delivering a positive return on investment to students. If the Department suspects fraudulent behavior, it should be able to open investigations and enforce the law.

b. Will you continue to open new investigations into for-profit colleges if future allegations of fraudulent behavior are credibly brought forth?

I believe that all colleges and universities - regardless of tax status - should be delivering a positive return on investment to students. If the Department suspects fraudulent behavior, it should be able to open investigations and enforce the law.

12. Will you commit to allowing state regulatory agencies and CFPB to investigate credible allegations involving student loan servicers without ED interference—including by turning over any student aid data requested by the states or CFPB?

The Department is charged by Congress to administer the federal student loan program, including overseeing its contractors and vendors that interact with student and parent borrowers, institutions, third-party servicers, and other players. While I am open to working with any partner inside and outside of the Department, the effective operation of FSA is our responsibility.

13. Will you implement any changes to the process of applying for and receiving PSLF? If so, what changes will you make, and how will they benefit borrowers?

I will ensure that FSA effectively implements the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program in the manner authorized by Congress.

14. Will you commit to continuing to process PSLF applications and granting the debt relief that successful applicants are legally entitled to receive?

I will ensure that FSA effectively implements the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program in the manner authorized by Congress.

15. Will you commit to publishing data on the PSLF relief granted and number of PSLF applications received by the Department?

I will ensure that FSA effectively implements the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program in the manner authorized by Congress.

16. Will you honor ED's October 2021 commitment to implement automatic PSLF tracking for veterans, service members, and other current or former federal employees by linking Federal Student Aid data with other agencies' employment data?

I will ensure that FSA effectively implements the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program in the manner authorized by Congress.

17. Will you implement any changes to the process of applying for and receiving IDR relief? If so, what changes will you make, and how will they benefit borrowers?

FSA continues to process IDR applications that it has received from borrowers over the last few months. Because of the legal challenges associated with the SAVE Plan, the Department has a significant backlog as those borrowers are currently in an administrative forbearance. I look forward to working with Congress to provide better options for borrowers to repay their federal student loans, including simplifying and streamlining the myriad of repayment plans that are confusing to students and their families.

18. Will you commit to continuing to process IDR discharge applications and granting the debt relief that successful applicants are legally entitled to receive?

FSA continues to process IDR applications that it has received from borrowers over the last few months. Because of the legal challenges associated with the SAVE Plan, the Department has a significant backlog as those borrowers are currently in an administrative forbearance. I look forward to working with Congress to provide better options for borrowers to repay their federal student loans, including simplifying and streamlining the myriad of repayment plans that are confusing to students and their families.

19. Will you commit to publishing data on the IDR relief granted and the number of IDR applications received by the Department?

The Department will collect and publish all data required by Congress under the law.

20. Will you continue to defend the borrower defense discharge regulations now enjoined by the 5th Circuit?

The Department's efforts around borrower defense to repayment are currently being challenged in the legal system; recently, the U.S. Supreme Court agreed to hear a case examining the Department's authority that could have significant implications for borrowers seeking both group and individual discharges. Irrespective of the legal challenges, the Department has faced significant delays in processing BDR claims due to problems at FSA during the Biden administration and the need to prioritize outstanding claims under the *Sweet* settlement. I look forward to working with Congress to identify ways to improve the BDR process.

21. Will you commit to continuing to process borrower defense applications and granting the debt relief that successful applicants are legally entitled to receive?

The Department's efforts around borrower defense to repayment are currently being challenged in the legal system; recently, the U.S. Supreme Court agreed to hear a case examining the Department's authority that could have significant implications for borrowers seeking both group and individual discharges. Irrespective of the legal challenges, the Department has faced significant delays in processing BDR claims due to problems at FSA during the Biden administration and the need to prioritize outstanding claims under the *Sweet* settlement. I look forward to working with Congress to identify ways to improve the BDR process.

22. Will you commit to publishing data on the number of borrowers who have submitted borrower defense applications and received discharge under this program?

The Department will collect and publish all data required by Congress under the law.

23. Will you continue to defend the closed school discharge regulations now enjoined by the 5th Circuit?

The Department has several tools at its disposal to ensure that institutions of higher education meet the fiscal requirements to administer federal aid, through program participation agreements and institutional requirements set by accreditors. When colleges and universities close, the Department should facilitate teach-out agreements, transfer of credit, and other opportunities so that students can continue their postsecondary education. For those students that meet current criteria, a closed school discharge should be available, though the Department's new rules are being challenged in court.

24. Will you commit to continuing to process closed school discharge applications and granting the debt relief that successful applicants are legally entitled to receive?

The Department has several tools at its disposal to ensure that institutions of higher education meet the fiscal requirements to administer federal aid, through program participation agreements and institutional requirements set by accreditors. When colleges and universities close, the Department should facilitate teach-out agreements, transfer of credit, and other opportunities so that students can continue their postsecondary education. For those students that meet current criteria, a closed school discharge should be available, though the Department's new rules are being challenged in court.

25. Will you commit to publishing data on the number of borrowers that have been granted closed school discharge automatically as well as the number of closed school discharge applications submitted by borrowers and the number of borrowers approved?

The Department will collect and publish all data required by Congress under the law.

26. Will you seek any changes to the current criteria for TPD discharge? If so, what changes will you make, and how will they benefit borrowers?

At this time, I do not foresee any changes to the TPD process.

27. Will you commit to continuing to process TPD applications and granting the debt relief that successful applicants are legally entitled to receive?

At this time, I do not foresee any changes to the TPD process.

28. Will you seek any changes to the student loan servicer accountability framework that ED announced in November 2023? If so, what changes will you make, and how will they protect borrowers?

FSA must do a better job of increasing customer service to students and parent borrowers, especially coming out of the pandemic where student loan payments were paused for most borrowers for the last five years. I look forward to working with Department and FSA staff to review the performance of our current contractors with the goal of improving service delivery on behalf of students, their families, and taxpayers.

29. Will you commit to publishing data on the performance of the private companies that ED hires to service federal student loans? If not, why not?

I look forward to working with Department and FSA staff to review the performance of our current contractors with the goal of improving service delivery on behalf of students, their families, and taxpayers.

30. Will you ensure that ED continues to engage in robust oversight of the private companies it hires to service federal student loans? Will you commit to continue withholding payments to these servicers in response to credible evidence of servicing errors and misconduct?

I look forward to working with Department and FSA staff to review the performance of our current contractors with the goal of improving service delivery on behalf of students, their families, and taxpayers.