

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-3215

December 9, 2025

The Honorable Linda McMahon
Secretary of Education
U.S. Department of Education
Washington, D.C. 20202

Dear Secretary McMahon,

I write to express serious concern about the Department of Education's forthcoming implementation of recent changes in federal student loan policy. Based on the information available, the definition of "professional degree program" currently under consideration would exclude post-baccalaureate nursing programs and severely restrict access to federal borrowing for students pursuing advanced degrees in essential licensed professions.

This outcome would be deeply harmful for students, universities, and the national workforce. Nursing, education, social work, clinical psychology, engineering, and other post-baccalaureate licensure programs are vital to community health, economic mobility, professional leadership and public service. Institutions of higher education in the Bronx have warned that the exclusion of these programs would make advanced degrees unaffordable for many students and force others into higher-risk private lending markets, at a time when these fields are already severely burdened by worsening shortages.

We must expand access to advanced education, not narrow it. A restrictive interpretation would undermine our healthcare and education systems, weaken our workforce, and close doors for low-income, first-generation, and immigrant students who make up much of my district.

As the Department finalizes the proposed rule, I strongly urge the Department and the White House to reverse course and adopt a flexible, forward-looking definition that reflects the needs of the modern workforce and protects access to post-baccalaureate licensed professions.

The stakes for students and communities across the country are significant. I respectfully request that the Department reconsider this approach and explicitly include these career pathways before lasting harm is done.

Sincerely,



Ritchie Torres
Member of Congress