

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 15, 2007

CONTACT: Laura Capps/Melissa Wagoner
(202) 224-2633

SENATOR EDWARD M. KENNEDY AND HELP COMMITTEE MEMBERS ASK SECRETARY SPELLINGS TO REFRAIN FROM NEW HEA REGULATIONS

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Today, Senator Edward M. Kennedy and Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee members sent the following letter to the Secretary Education, Margaret Spellings, urging the department to refrain from proposing new regulations on accreditation until after the Higher Education Act is reauthorized.

June 14, 2007

The Honorable Margaret Spellings
Secretary, U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20202

Dear Secretary Spellings:

As you know, the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions is moving forward with reauthorization of the Higher Education Act. We're writing to let you know that we plan to make changes to the section of the law that deals with accreditation. We believe these changes will strengthen our nation's accreditation system by clarifying the Department of Education's responsibilities with respect to recognizing accreditation agencies and organizations, and by specifying the criteria that these agencies should examine when reviewing institutions of higher education.

Obviously, we're aware that you have just completed negotiated rulemaking on accreditation based on current law, and that the next step is for the Department to publish proposed regulations on this topic. Although Members differ on the particulars, we support your overall goal of ensuring that our accreditation system is an effective means of promoting quality in higher education. However, given our Committee's expectation that the current accreditation provisions will soon be changed, and that a new round of rulemaking on this issue will subsequently be needed, we respectfully ask that you refrain from proposing new regulations on accreditation until after the Higher Education Act is reauthorized.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

With respect and appreciation,

Sincerely,

Edward M. Kennedy
Chairman

Michael B. Enzi
Ranking Member

Christopher Dodd

Judd Gregg

Tom Harkin

Lamar Alexander

Barbara A. Mikulski

Richard Burr

Jeff Bingaman

Johnny Isakson

Patricia Murray

Lisa Murkowski

Jack Reed

Pat Roberts

Hillary Rodham Clinton

Barack Obama

Bernard Sanders

Sherrrod Brown