



For Immediate Release

Contact: Craig Orfield
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Monday, January 25, 2010

**Enzi Troubled By Possible Misuse of Taxpayer Dollars
at Department of Education**

Washington, D.C. – U.S. Senator Mike Enzi (R-Wyo.), Ranking Member of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee today requested that the Department of Education turn over all documents related to the Department's efforts to encourage colleges, universities and outside groups to lobby Congress on behalf of the Administration's higher education agenda.

"I am particularly concerned that the Department of Education may have used taxpayer resources to encourage colleges and universities as well as outside groups to lobby Congress on the President's higher education agenda, including a government takeover of student loans by eliminating the Federal Family Education Loan program," Enzi wrote in a letter to Department of Education Secretary Arne Duncan.

Enzi said that despite proposals for a government takeover of student loans, both Democrats and Republicans in Congress support giving students options to find the assistance they need to enroll and complete higher education.

"Contrary to recent statements made by the Department of Education, there remains bipartisan support in Congress to continue the decades-old private sector program to support students during these difficult times," Enzi wrote. "There is no public law that gives the Department of Education the authority to require that all institutions participate in the Direct Loan program."

"A government takeover of student loans would limit options for students and families, drive up the costs of higher education and leave the taxpayers with a higher bill," Enzi said. "We don't need any more costly Washington takeovers."

A copy of the letter is attached.

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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION,
LABOR, AND PENSIONS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6300

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January 25, 2010

The Honorable Arne Duncan
Secretary
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Ave, SW
Room 7W301
Washington, DC 20202

Dear Secretary Duncan:

As you know, I am a strong supporter of our nation's institutions of higher education and making loans available to students in need to help them realize the dream of a college education. Contrary to recent statements made by the Department of Education, there remains bipartisan support in Congress to continue the decades-old private sector program to support students during these difficult times. While the United States Senate considers various proposals, there is no public law that gives the Department of Education the authority to require that all institutions participate in the Direct Loan program.

Press reports over the past several months assert that the Department aggressively pressed stakeholders to support the Administration's legislative proposals. I am particularly concerned that the Department of Education may have used taxpayer resources to encourage colleges and universities as well as outside groups to lobby Congress on the President's higher education agenda, including a government takeover of student loans by eliminating the Federal Family Education Loan (FFEL) program.

I understand that the Department of Education's Office of Inspector General has stated an intent to examine this issue. However, I am concerned that the Inspector General's Office did not specify when this investigation will commence. As Ranking Member of the Committee with oversight responsibility for the Department, I am writing to request certain documents related to this matter. Accordingly, please provide the HELP Committee with all documents, written or electronic, including materials used during conference calls, web seminars, the recent Federal Student Aid conference, stakeholder meetings and campus visits related to the Department's plans and efforts to promote transition to the Direct Loan program from the FFEL program.

I would appreciate a response to this request no later than close of business on February 8, 2010. If you have any questions about this request and are unable to reach

me, please have your staff contact Amy Shank, Oversight and Investigations Director for the HELP Committee, at (202) 224-6770. Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



MICHAEL B. ENZI
U.S. SENATOR

CC: The Honorable Tom Harkin, Chairman
Mary Mitchelson, Department of Education Acting Inspector General