

Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection
1700 G Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20552



September 3, 2019

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member
Committee on Health, Education,
Labor and Pensions
United States Senate
154 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Sherrod Brown
Ranking Member
Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban
Affairs
United States Senate
534 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Ranking Member Murray and Ranking Member Brown:

I write in response to your letter about the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau's (Bureau's) efforts to protect borrowers, particularly student loan borrowers, and ensure a fair marketplace. The Bureau creates opportunities for all people, including young adult consumers, to make choices about money that best serve their own life goals.

As you know, under Section 1035 of the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act, the Bureau's Private Education Loan Ombudsman is required to establish a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Department of Education's student loan ombudsman to ensure coordination in providing assistance to and serving borrowers seeking to resolve complaints related to their private education or Federal student loans. With respect to the Bureau's collaboration with the Department of Education on student loan complaints, information sharing between the Bureau and the Department of Education was governed by an October 19, 2011 MOU that, among other things, allowed the Bureau to refer complaints to the Department of Education through a secure web portal. The Department of Education terminated that MOU effective October 1, 2017.

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In the absence of an MOU, the Department of Education continues to have access to the Bureau's public complaint database. Bureau staff also continue to analyze complaint data and provide that analysis as technical assistance when requested by the Department of Education. Moreover, in a 2018 meeting with Federal Student Aid officials, Senior Bureau officials requested that the agencies re-establish an MOU or similar information sharing agreement, and staff subsequently engaged in follow-up communications to that end.

The Bureau continues to evaluate options for entering into a new MOU with the Department of Education or other tools to facilitate information sharing across our range of responsibilities. Additionally, the statutory function you cite belongs to the Private Education Loan Ombudsman. That position was filled effective August 19, 2019 following the designation by Secretary of the Treasury, in consultation with the Bureau, of Robert G. Cameron to serve in this position.¹ With the appointment of Mr. Cameron, I am confident that we will have a productive working relationship with the Department of Education.

Should you have any additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact me or have your staff contact Janel Fitzhugh in the Bureau's Office of Legislative Affairs. Ms. Fitzhugh can be reached at (202) 435-7149.

Sincerely,



Kathleen L. Kraninger
Director

¹ <https://www.consumerfinance.gov/about-us/newsroom/cfpb-appoints-private-education-loan-ombudsman/>