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U.S. Secretary of Education Linda McMahon and University Leaders Participate in Higher Education Roundtable at the White House

Today, U.S. Secretary of Education Linda McMahon and Under Secretary of Education Nicholas Kent participated in a roundtable discussion with university leaders, think tank professionals, and education advocates about the need for bold reforms to restore public confidence in higher education. The roundtable, entitled “Administrative Bloat and Low-Value Programs: How U.S. Universities are Failing American Families and How They Can Reform,” was hosted at the White House and included dozens of additional stakeholders.

Secretary McMahon and Under Secretary Kent highlighted the challenges students and families face under America’s outdated higher education system. They also discussed key provisions of President Trump’s *One Big Beautiful Bill Act*, which will reduce costs in higher education and increase accountability, including the creation of Workforce Pell Grants, reforms to student loan repayment, new borrowing caps on federal lending, and other measures designed to improve the return on investment of a college degree.

Roundtable participants included Casey Sacks, President of BridgeValley Community and Technical College and Senior Advisor at the U.S. Department of Education; Erin Valdez, Executive Director of the Incubator of the Center for Education and Public Service at the University of Austin and Director of Education and Workforce Policy at the Cicero Institute; Michael Bettersworth, Chief Marketing Officer at Texas State Technical College; Raymond “Ray” Rodrigues, Chancellor of the State University System of Florida; and Kimberly Fletcher, President of Moms for America. Each shared their expertise on higher education shaped by their leadership in the field.

“It was an honor to meet with education leaders today to discuss how we can revitalize Americans’ dwindling faith in postsecondary education. Staggering increases in tuition rates, dismal earnings outcomes for many degrees, and wasteful spending on armies of administrators and DEI programs all underline the urgent need for bold reforms. Universities must refocus their operations to deliver high-value credentials and a better return on investment for the next generation of Americans,” **said U.S. Secretary of Education Linda McMahon.** “It was so encouraging to hear from higher education leaders in Texas, Florida, and West Virginia who are laser focused on keeping costs down and innovating to ensure public colleges are preparing graduates for rewarding careers in high-demand fields.”

“In partnership with college and university leaders nationwide, the Trump Administration is moving swiftly to implement long-overdue reforms for borrowers and taxpayers, hold

institutions accountable for poor outcomes, and create new pathways to give students more post-high school options beyond the traditional four-year degree,” **said Under Secretary of Education Nicholas Kent**. “It was a privilege to join Secretary McMahon and many distinguished speakers today to highlight key provisions in the One Big Beautiful Bill Act that will deliver on the President’s promise to restore the greatness of American higher education.”

Background

In October, the Trump Administration circulated a draft “Compact for Excellence in Higher Education” to several universities outlining a range of overdue reforms to improve public confidence in higher education. The Compact included commitments to aggressively contain costs, improve return on investment, and reduce administrative bloat—the need for which today’s roundtable discussion reaffirmed. The Administration continues to solicit stakeholder feedback to ensure the enormous public investment in postsecondary education is advancing rigorous academic research, powering economic growth, and delivering value to students and taxpayers.

See Secretary McMahon’s roundtable remarks [here](#) and Under Secretary Kent’s remarks [here](#).

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