

August 17, 2017

Dear Secretary DeVos:

As a higher education administrator, I believe all children deserve a great education and to feel safe and welcomed in their classrooms. When a school or a school district doesn't treat students fairly and allows discrimination, civil rights laws required the Department of Education to step in. In order to make sure that schools understand what the law requires of them, and to make sure that everyone understands the protections students have, regulations (or rules) and guidance have been developed over the past several years to clarify the law. I support our civil rights laws and these tools that help to make sure students receive the protections and supports they deserve.

Our education system is unfair to too many students and communities. Students who are Black, Latino, Asian American, Native American, immigrants, English learners, girls, LGBTQ or students with disabilities face too many barriers to educational success. We need to use all of the tools we can to change that problem and make sure ALL children get the education they deserve. Now is not the time to take these tools away or weaken them. I oppose any effort to rescind, modify or replace regulations and guidance that clarify our civil rights and education laws.

As an individual who firmly believes in education, and carries out the day-to-day logistics of the nondiscrimination program where I work, I believe in the laws, regulations and guidance that I uphold at my institution every day. Whether it be students experiencing discrimination based on race, or egregious incidents of sexual violence, I see the most vulnerable students through their journey to heal and reach their goals. I often wonder what these students would endure, if not for the support offered by our institution through our nondiscrimination program. The most rewarding aspect of my job is attending graduation and watching students who experienced discrimination or harassment walk across the stage with their diploma. It also warms my heart to see the accused students turn their lives around and complete their education, with the knowledge that they have received the most holistic education possible and their behavior will not continue into the workforce. College isn't just about a degree, but learning how to operate in a multitude of social environments in the most effective manner. Eliminating this aspect of education would be a detriment to the American society.

It's the Department of Education's job to help our nation's schools provide high-quality education for all children. America should be a place where every child, no matter their unique challenges, their unique needs, or where they come from, can grow up to be what they dream.

Sincerely,

Alisha L. Carter