

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0309

August 21, 2025

The Honorable Linda McMahon
Secretary of Education
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202

Secretary McMahon,

I write to raise my concern about the impact of the Trump administration's actions on community colleges in Arizona and across the country, which are essential to getting students the skills they need to succeed in today's workforce. By targeting institutions of higher education and withdrawing funding, the administration also undermines community colleges and their ability to support workforce development and economic opportunity for millions of Americans. Given our shared goal of bolstering the workforce and putting the middle class in reach for more Americans, I hope you take seriously the impact these actions are having on working people across the country.

Community colleges are the path to both a good paying job and higher education for nearly 40 percent of American students every year. According to the 2025 Economic Impact Study, Arizona's ten public community college districts have a 15.2-billion-dollar economic impact. As hubs for workforce development, these institutions work closely with local employers to respond to workforce needs. Colleges' ability to quickly develop programs that align with in-demand jobs allows students to advance their skills and, as a result, their careers. In my own state, I have seen this with the development of the Semiconductor Technician Quick Start Program at Maricopa Community Colleges, which trains students in specialized skills to quickly enter a fast-growing advanced manufacturing job market. Arizona is home to two of the world's three largest semiconductor manufacturers and Quick Start is closely aligned with the state's workforce and economy. If the Trump administration wants to expand domestic manufacturing, community college programs like Quick Start are essential to supporting and advancing this goal. These types of programs should receive more federal support, not less.

Instead, community colleges are facing a wave of changes and unclear policies from the Department of Education and across the administration. On top of that, inconsistent funding makes it difficult for them to implement and sustain these types of opportunities. They are forced to navigate vague directives, left in the dark about reliability of federal grants, and lack clear points of contact to get answers because of staffing cuts at the Department of Education, all of which hurts their ability to serve students and communities effectively. To repair this damage and set community colleges up for success, I request you provide a response to the following questions by September 2, 2025:

- Has the administration evaluated the specific impacts of recent policy changes, including grant freezes and mass firings of federal workers, on community colleges?
- What measures is the administration taking to provide greater stability and support to community colleges, ensuring that programs with positive contributions to local economic development can continue uninterrupted?
- What proactive steps is the administration taking to engage with community colleges and adequately equip them as they begin the upcoming academic year?
- How is the administration communicating with and involving community colleges in the implementation of Executive Order 14278?

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Mark Kelly
United States Senator