



June 12, 2018

**ATTORNEY GENERAL MADIGAN OPPOSES U.S. EDUCATION SECRETARY DEVOS' PROPOSAL TO DELAY & REPLACE RULE PROTECTING STUDENTS ENROLLED IN ONLINE EDUCATION**

*Rollback Would Strip Online Students of Critical Consumer Protections – Particularly Vital at For-Profit Schools*

**Chicago** — Attorney General Lisa Madigan, along with 15 other attorneys general, submitted [comments](#) to the U.S. Department of Education opposing Secretary Betsy DeVos' proposal to delay and replace a federal regulation, the Program Integrity and Improvement Rule, which provides consumer protections for students enrolled in online college programs. The rule would increase the transparency and accountability of online programs offered in multiple states and would bolster state regulators' ability to protect students enrolled in such programs.

"The Department of Education is on a crusade to eliminate critical protections for students, many of whom often fall prey to predatory for-profit schools," Madigan said. "I will continue to fight for those students who have been taken advantage of by the deceptive for-profit school industry."

The rule, which was slated to go into effect July 1, is designed to strengthen states' ability to protect online students by requiring schools that offer online programs in multiple states to obtain authorization to operate in each state where programs are offered, to the extent authorization is required under state law. The rule would also provide crucial disclosures to online students, including a disclosure alerting students if a school determines that a program does not satisfy requirements for obtaining professional licensure in the students' state. In addition, the rule would require schools to disclose refund policies and to alert students of adverse actions against the school by accreditors or state agencies. The delay or replacement of the rule will deprive students of information that would help them choose appropriate programs and exercise their rights under state law.

Madigan and the other attorneys general explain that state oversight is especially important for one sector of the online education industry – for-profit schools. Investigations by state attorneys general have revealed widespread misconduct by for-profit schools. For example, Madigan has recovered more than \$30 million for students enrolled at for-profit colleges, including students of Corinthian Colleges, EDMC and Westwood College.

The long list of actions against for-profit schools demonstrates that state oversight is critical to protect students. In addition, the Department's continuing efforts to dismantle existing protections for students, such as the Department's actions to delay and replace the Gainful Employment Rule and the Borrower Defense to Repayment Rule, have left students more vulnerable to schools' misconduct and have made state oversight even more important.

Madigan and the other attorneys general explain that the Department has failed to provide any justification for such a delay and replacement of the rule. The Department has not cited any new facts or changed circumstances to justify a delay or reconsideration.

Joining Madigan in filing the comments are the attorneys general of Connecticut, the District of Columbia, Delaware, Hawaii, Iowa, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New York, North Carolina, Oregon, Rhode Island, Virginia and Washington.

-30-

[Return to June 2018 Press Releases](#)

