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HEALTH, EMPLOYMENT, LABOR, AND PENSIONS



Joe Courtney

Congress of the United States

2nd District, Connecticut

April 5, 2018

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The Honorable Betsy DeVos
Secretary of Education
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20202

Dear Secretary DeVos:

As you may be aware, Ridley-Lowell Business & Technical Institute—a certificate-granting institution with five campuses across three states, and a footprint in my district—closed abruptly on April 4. I urge the Department of Education (“Department”) to take swift action to ensure that students who attended this institution are aware of the resources available to them to help them continue their educations, discharge their loans, or retrieve other information from the school.

Ridley-Lowell is not the first institution to shutter its campuses overnight—in fact, the Federal Student Aid office lists thirty institutions on their website that have closed. We ask that Ridley-Lowell be immediately added to the list of closed institutions and that resources be made available as soon as possible to help current students and recent graduates know what options are available to them. Further, we ask that the Department provide student loan debt relief to current Ridley-Lowell students to the maximum extent possible. School closures can be financially devastating to student loan borrowers and their families, and the Department must do everything in its power to make these defrauded students whole.

The last time a higher education institution in my region closed, the Department posted resources, including a schedule of webinars about the closure and what to do moving forward, on their website within 48 hours. In the past, I have applauded the great lengths that the Department has gone to help former students of closed institutions move on with their educations and their lives. I am hopeful that the Federal Student Aid office will mirror that effort with this most recent school closure so that Members of Congress may direct students and recent graduates to a single clearinghouse of resources.

I encourage the Department to work quickly to provide resources and, when appropriate, offer student loan debt relief to the students and recent graduates of Ridley-Lowell Business & Technical Institute. Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,


JOE COURTNEY