



A Resolution to Pledge Support to the Historic Mission of the Department of Education

S-03-02-25B/F

Sponsor: University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Co-sponsor/s: Indiana University Bloomington

1. *Whereas*, The Association of Students of the University of Nebraska (ASUN) is a member of the Association of Big Ten Students (ABTS); and,
2. *Whereas*, the universities of the Big Ten Conference contribute significantly to national research, workforce development, and economic growth; and,
3. *Whereas*, ABTS represents a collective student population of over 800,000 students; and,
4. *Whereas*, The Department of Education's (ED) programs, such as Pell Grants, federal student loans, and research funding, are essential in ensuring affordability and accessibility for all students currently enrolled in higher education; and,
5. *Whereas*, Each year, ED provides approximately \$100 billion in student loans and over \$30 billion in Pell Grants to more than six million low-income students, enabling them to pursue postsecondary education¹; and,
6. *Whereas*, ED enforces students' civil rights through its Office for Civil Rights, ensuring that educational institutions comply with federal laws prohibiting discrimination based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, and age. This enforcement upholds protections such as those provided under Title IX, which addresses gender-based discrimination¹; and,
7. *Whereas*, ED manages significant grant programs that support institutional development and student success. In fiscal year 2024, Congress allocated \$3.3 billion toward higher education programs, including \$400 million directly supporting Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and \$229 million for Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs)¹; and,
8. *Whereas*, The U.S. Department of Education allocates approximately \$2.14 billion annually to Federal Work-Study and Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants,

¹ Inside Higher Ed, "Five Ways the Education Department Impacts Higher Ed," February 7, 2025, <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/government/student-aid-policy/2025/02/07/five-ways-education-department-impacts-higher-ed>.

providing critical financial assistance to low-income students by enabling them to gain work experience while pursuing their degrees and reducing reliance on student loans¹; and,

9. *Whereas*, legislative efforts have been introduced to eliminate the U.S. Department of Education, such as H.R. 899 – To Terminate the Department of Education, which seeks to dismantle the department and transfer its responsibilities to other federal agencies or state governments, threatening the continuity of essential student aid programs, civil rights enforcement, and federal education funding²; and,
10. *Whereas*, proposals to dismantle or diminish ED pose a significant threat to these essential functions, potentially jeopardizing student aid programs, civil rights enforcement, and critical funding that our institutions rely upon to maintain educational standards and accessibility; and,
11. *Whereas*, federal support for the U.S Department of Education is extremely important to continue to strive toward success in academic progress, ensure access to education, and positively benefit Big Ten schools to maintain our leadership in both research and development.
12. *Whereas*, the Department of Education enforces the CLERY Act, which ensures safety and monitoring for campuses; and,
13. *Whereas*, enforcement of the CLERY Act has declined, contributing to numerous violations and campus safety issues throughout the Big Ten.
14. *Therefore be it resolved*, ABTS, as representatives of our student bodies, puts our full support behind the historic mission of the Department of Education’s programs due to its fiscal support of higher education; and,
15. *Be it further resolved*, ABTS is supportive of the historic mission of the Department of Education that is integral to the function of higher education, but urges the ED to continue to advocate for diversity, equity, and inclusion at all levels of education; and,
16. *Be it further resolved*, ABTS urges all legislative bodies to maintain the Department of Education and its support for the students; and,
17. *Be it further resolved*, ABTS will urge their representatives to support the continued expansion of the Department of Education, ensuring robust investment in student aid programs, research initiatives, and civil rights protections, recognizing that any reduction in these critical resources would undermine the accessibility, affordability, and excellence of higher education in the United States; and,
18. *Therefore, be it resolved*, ABTS shall issue a statement reflecting its support of the historic mission of the Department of Education and encourage member institutions to circulate this statement to appropriate parties.

² H.R. 899 – To Terminate the Department of Education, 119th Congress (2025), <https://www.congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/house-bill/899>.

Vote: In Favor 10 Opposed 0 Abstentions 0

Therefore, the bill: **PASSES** FAILS