

**Chairman Hal Rogers**  
**House Committee on Appropriations**  
**Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies**  
**Department of Education FY 2013 Budget Hearing**  
**March 22, 2012**  
**Opening Statement – As Prepared**

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Mr. Chairman, thank you for yielding. Secretary Duncan, I thank you for taking the time to discuss the FY 2013 budget request for the Department of Education.

The importance of education as an investment in future generations is a value that can be traced back to our founders. John Adams extolled the virtues of educational attainment; Thomas Jefferson founded a university; and others promoted education across all classes. In my district in southern and eastern Kentucky, we have worked for years to improve the educational opportunities available to students of all ages. There are still many students who are the first in their families to ever go on to college, and many more who are receiving their education and staying in the region to live and work. I have long espoused that education is the paramount to the economic prosperity of my region and I've been proud to work with organizations like Forward in the Fifth, PRIDE, and the Rogers Scholars programs to increase literacy, inspire excitement in learning, bolster science and math education, and set student sights toward a lifetime of learning.

The federal government has certainly tried to follow in this tradition and we have spent billions of dollars with the goal of improving the quality of and access to education for Americans. Forty years ago, we spent about \$4,500 per student in this country. Today we spend over \$10,000. Yet we continue to see our students' achievement fall behind students in other countries. When we see federal dollars funneled to programs which have not improved outcomes, when examples arise of those dollars being wasted at the school district level, and when groups demand more dollars with no oversight or reform, it makes some wonder if federal investment is worthwhile. As policy-makers, it is our job to ensure that these investments have returns.

For our part, this Committee has been the tip of the spear in returning much needed austerity and oversight to our budget process and executive agency expenditures. In the last two fiscal years, this Committee has cut discretionary spending by nearly \$100 billion, the first time two consecutive reductions have occurred since WWII. Yet despite the Committee's valiant efforts to turn the ship around, it is mandatory spending that is the largest driver of our debt – programs that are largely outside the purview of this committee. I strongly believe that leadership from this Administration and collaboration in Congress is urgently needed to address these entitlement programs. Unfortunately, this budget request moves us backward on that front. Your budget request seeks to add another \$9 billion to mandatory spending, putting critical dollars on auto-pilot.

Mr. Secretary, basic economics will tell you that if we do not bring mandatory spending under control and cease our trillion dollar deficit spending habits, we will not only make it more difficult for our children to receive a world-class education, we will have saddled them with a burden that limits their freedom and opportunity. We have much work to do to get even a passing grade.

Thank you for being with us today. I look forward to hearing your comments on these issues.

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