

FAFSA VERIFICATION EFFICIENCY ACT

JULY 2, 2026.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union and ordered to be printed

Mr. WALBERG, from the Committee on Education and Workforce,
submitted the following

R E P O R T

together with

MINORITY VIEWS

[To accompany H.R. 7893]

The Committee on Education and Workforce, to whom was referred the bill (H.R. 7893) to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to improve the process for the verification of social security numbers required to be provided to the Secretary of Education for Federal student aid, and for other purposes, having considered the same, reports favorably thereon with an amendment and recommends that the bill as amended do pass.

The amendment is as follows:

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “FAFSA Verification Efficiency Act”.

SEC. 2. SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER VERIFICATION.

Section 484(o) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1091(o)) is amended, in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by striking “The Secretary” and all that follows through “following conditions” and inserting “Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary of Education, in cooperation with the Commissioner of the Social Security Administration, shall verify the social security number and citizenship status of any individual that is required to be provided to the Secretary for Federal student aid under sections 483, 484(a), and 494, and shall enforce the following conditions”.

PURPOSE

H.R. 7893, *FAFSA Verification Efficiency Act*, amends the *Higher Education Act of 1965* (HEA) to improve the process for the

verification of Social Security Numbers (SSN) required to be provided to the Secretary of Education for federal student aid.

COMMITTEE ACTION

113TH CONGRESS

First Session—Hearing

On November 13, 2013, the Committee on Education and the Workforce held a hearing on “Keeping College Within Reach: Simplifying Federal Student Aid.” The purpose of the hearing was to examine the need to streamline, consolidate, and simplify federal student aid programs. Testifying before the Committee were Ms. Kristin D. Conklin, Founding Partner, HCM Strategies, LLC, Washington, D.C.; Dr. Sandy Baum, Research Professor of Education Policy, George Washington University Graduate School of Education and Human Development, and Senior Fellow, Urban Institute, Washington, D.C.; Ms. Jennifer Mishory, Deputy Director, Young Invincibles, Washington, D.C.; and Mr. Jason Delisle, Director, Federal Education Budget Project, New America Foundation, Washington, D.C.

118TH CONGRESS

Second Session—Hearings

On April 10, 2024, the Subcommittee on Higher Education and Workforce Development held a hearing on “FAFSA Fail: Examining the Impact on Students, Families, and Schools.” The purpose of the hearing was to assess the causes and impacts of the failed Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) rollout, including the effects of delays and data inaccuracies on students and postsecondary institutions. Testifying before the Subcommittee were Mr. Mark Kantrowitz, President, Cerebly, Inc, Skokie, Illinois; Mr. Justin Draeger, President and CEO, National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators, Washington, D.C.; Ms. Kim Cook, CEO, National College Attainment Network, Washington, D.C.; and Ms. Rachelle Feldman, Vice Provost, Enrollment, University of North Carolina Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

On September 24, 2024, the Subcommittee on Higher Education and Workforce Development held a hearing on “GAO Uncovers Biden-Harris FAFSA Failures.” The purpose of the hearing was to review data and findings from the Government Accountability Office (GAO) on the Department of Education’s implementation of the new FAFSA, with a focus on timelines, technical challenges, and transparency and communication with students, institutions, and taxpayers. Testifying before the Subcommittee were Ms. Melissa Emrey-Arras, Director, Education, Workforce, and Income Security Issues, GAO, Washington, D.C.; and Mrs. Marisol Cruz Cain, Director, Information Technology and Cybersecurity Team, GAO, Washington, D.C.

119TH CONGRESS

First Session—Hearing

On September 16, 2025, the Subcommittee on Higher Education and Workforce Development held a hearing on “No More Surprises:

Reforming College Pricing for Students and Families.” The purpose of the hearing was to examine ways to make college costs more transparent. Testifying before the Subcommittee were Mr. Justin Draeger, Senior Vice President, Affordability, Strada Education Foundation, Washington, D.C.; Mr. Lee Wishing III, Vice President for Student Recruitment and Chief Marketing Officer, Grove City College, Grove City, Pennsylvania; Ms. Amy Laitinen, Senior Director of Higher Education, New America, Washington, D.C.; and Dr. Andrew Gillen, Research Fellow, Cato Institute, Washington, D.C.

Legislative Action

On March 12, 2026, Chairman Tim Walberg (R-MI) introduced the *FAFSA Verification Efficiency Act* (H.R. 7893). The bill was referred solely to the Committee on Education and Workforce. On March 17, 2026, the Committee considered H.R. 7893 in legislative session and reported it favorably, as amended, to the House of Representatives by a recorded vote of 19–13.¹ The Committee considered the following amendments to H.R. 7893:

1. Chairman Walberg offered an Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute that made a technical change. The amendment passed by voice vote.
2. Ranking Member Robert C. “Bobby” Scott (D-VA) offered an Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute that required the Department of Education (ED) to verify any SSN provided by a student to an eligible institution and the SSN of any other individual that is required to be provided to ED as a condition of eligibility for federal student aid. The amendment failed by a recorded vote of 13–19.
3. Representative Scott offered an amendment to prohibit FAFSA information from being shared by ED for immigration enforcement purposes. The amendment also prohibited ED from collecting information on citizenship other than for eligibility purposes. The amendment failed by a recorded vote of 13–19.

COMMITTEE VIEWS

INTRODUCTION

H.R. 7893, *FAFSA Verification Efficiency Act*, amends the HEA to require ED, in cooperation with the Social Security Administration (SSA), to verify the SSN and citizenship status of anyone applying for federal student aid and their contributors.

The FUTURE Act

*Fostering Undergraduate Talent by Unlocking Resources for Education (FUTURE) Act*² was enacted in 2019, and it requires that all students, and their contributors, submitting a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) consent to having their tax information requested directly from the IRS and populated into the FAFSA.³ To accomplish this authentication, ED collects personal information, including SSNs, from individuals when those individ-

¹ <https://www.congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/house-bill/7893/all-actions>.

² <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/5363>.

³ 26 U.S.C. 6103. [https://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?req=\(title:26%20section:6103\)](https://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?req=(title:26%20section:6103)).

uals create their StudentAid.gov account.⁴ ED shares some of this account information with SSA, then SSA returns a verification for the SSN associated with the individual.⁵ Citizenship status is automatically reported to ED by SSA as part of this identity verification process and has been since 1995.⁶

This data match constitutes a matching program under the *Privacy Act of 1974*⁷ and is conducted under the statutory authority provided in the HEA.⁸ However, this statutory authority only applies to students⁹ who are applying for federal aid and parents of dependent students,¹⁰ not other contributors that a student might include on his or her FAFSA.

Importance of Citizenship Verification

The HEA authorizes ED to verify an individual's citizenship and immigration status through his or her SSN when that individual applies for federal aid, including a grant, loan, or work study.¹¹ Only U.S. citizens, permanent residents, and individuals able to provide evidence that they are in the U.S. for a non-temporary purpose with the intention of becoming a citizen or a permanent resident are eligible to receive federal student aid.¹² Verifying students' citizenship is statutorily required to ensure that only U.S. citizens are utilizing federal student aid. If an individual has an SSN, it must be provided when creating a StudentAid.gov account. However, as long as the student applying for federal aid is a citizen, HEA does not require contributors (parents, stepparents, and spouses) to be a citizen.¹³ Contributors without an SSN can still create an account with the SSN field blank to contribute to a student's FAFSA-reported income.¹⁴ However, when contributors are able to provide an SSN, SSA can complete identity verification more efficiently, decreasing the time students must wait for this verification.

Need for Legislation

ED requested clarifying language to support the verification of contributors' SSNs and citizenship status. There are many cases where a student's spouse needs a StudentAid.gov account. For example, an account is necessary when the student and his or her spouse did not jointly file taxes.¹⁵ According to ED, there are over 1 million married FAFSA applicants applying for aid each year whose spouses need to have their information verified by SSA.¹⁶ Additionally, a student with divorced parents whose parent remar-

⁴ <https://financialaidtoolkit.ed.gov/resources/creating-account.pdf>.

⁵ *Id.*

⁶ <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-1995-12-01/html/95-29338.htm>.

⁷ <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/08/06/2025-14849/privacy-act-of-1974-matching-program>.

⁸ 20 U.S.C. § 1091(p) <https://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?req=granuleid:USC-2012-title20-section1091&num=0&edition=2012>.

⁹ <https://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?req=granuleid:USC-2012-title20-section1091&num=0&edition=2012>.

¹⁰ 20 U.S.C. § 1078-2(f) [https://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?req=\(title:20%20section:1078-2%20edition:prelim\)](https://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?req=(title:20%20section:1078-2%20edition:prelim)).

¹¹ 20 U.S.C. § 1091(g) <https://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?req=granuleid:USC-2012-title20-section1091&num=0&edition=2012>.

¹² <https://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?req=granuleid:USC-2012-title20-section1091&num=0&edition=2012>.

¹³ Memo from Department of Education.

¹⁴ <https://financialaidtoolkit.ed.gov/resources/creating-account.pdf>.

¹⁵ <https://financialaidtoolkit.ed.gov/resources/creating-account.pdf>.

¹⁶ Memo from Department of Education.

ried but did not file taxes jointly would be required to list both the parent and the stepparent as a contributor on the FAFSA; both the parent and stepparent would need a StudentAid.gov account in this case.¹⁷ The *FAFSA Verification Efficiency Act* will clarify that anyone who makes a StudentAid.gov account—including spouses and stepparents—must have their identity and SSN verified through SSA.

CONCLUSION

Congress should strive to make the StudentAid.gov verification process straightforward and efficient for students to encourage them to quickly complete their FAFSAs. Some forms, however, are not available to the student until identity verification is complete, which currently takes between one and three days.¹⁸ The *FAFSA Verification Efficiency Act* ensures that ED and SSA are using all the information available to them, which includes citizenship status, to quickly and accurately verify an individual's identity.

SECTION-BY-SECTION SUMMARY

Section 1—Short title

- The short title is *FAFSA Verification Efficiency Act*.

Section 2—Social Security Number verification

- The bill amends the HEA to require ED, in cooperation with SSA, to verify the SSN and citizenship status of anyone applying for federal student aid and their contributors.

EXPLANATION OF AMENDMENTS

The amendments, including the amendment in the nature of a substitute, are explained in the body of this report.

APPLICATION OF LAW TO THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

Section 102(b)(3) of Public Law 104–1 requires a description of the application of this bill to the legislative branch. H.R. 7893, *FAFSA Verification Efficiency Act*, amends the *Higher Education Act of 1965* to improve the process for the verification of SSNs required to be provided to the Secretary of Education for Federal student aid. H.R. 7893 applies only to ED and SSA and therefore does not apply to the Legislative Branch.

UNFUNDED MANDATE STATEMENT

Pursuant to section 423 of the *Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974*, Pub. L. No. 93–344 (as amended by section 101(a)(2) of the *Unfunded Mandates Reform Act of 1995*, Pub. L. No. 104–4), the Committee traditionally adopts as its own the cost estimate prepared by the Director of the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) pursuant to section 402 of the *Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974*. The Committee reports that because this cost estimate was not timely submitted to

¹⁷ <https://studentaid.gov/fafsa-apply/parents>.

¹⁸ <https://financialaidtoolkit.ed.gov/resources/creating-account.pdf>.

the Committee before the filing of this report, the Committee is not in a position to make a cost estimate for H.R. 7893.

EARMARK STATEMENT

H.R. 7893 does not contain any congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits as defined in clause 9 of House rule XXI.

ROLL CALL VOTES

Clause 3(b) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives requires the Committee Report to include for each record vote on a motion to report the measure or matter and on any amendments offered to the measure or matter the total number of votes for and against and the names of the Members voting for and against.

Date: 3/17/2026

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE RECORD OF COMMITTEE VOTE

Roll Call: 7

Bill: H.R. 7893

Amendment Number: 1

Disposition: Failed by a Full Committee Roll Call Vote

Sponsor/Amendment: Rep. Scott (VA)

SCOTT_FAFSA_AMD_04

Name & State	Aye	No	Not Voting	Name & State	Aye	No	Not Voting
Mr. WALBERG (MI) (Chairman)		X		Mr. SCOTT (VA) (Ranking)	X		
Mr. WILSON (SC)			X	Mr. COURTNEY (CT)	X		
Mrs. FOXX (NC)		X		Ms. WILSON (FL)			X
Mr. THOMPSON (PA)		X		Ms. BONAMICI (OR)	X		
Mr. GROTHMAN (WI)		X		Mr. TAKANO (CA)	X		
Ms. STEFANIK (NY)		X		Ms. ADAMS (NC)	X		
Mr. ALLEN (GA)		X		Mr. DESAULNIER (CA)			X
Mr. COMER (KY)		X		Mr. NORCROSS (NJ)			X
Mr. OWENS (UT)		X		Ms. MCBATH (GA)	X		
Ms. MCCLAIN (MI)		X		Ms. HAYES (CT)	X		
Mrs. MILLER (IL)		X		Ms. OMAR (MN)	X		
Ms. LETLOW (LA)			X	Ms. STEVENS (MI)	X		
Mr. KILEY (CA)		X		Mr. CASAR (TX)	X		
Mr. RULLI (OH)		X		Ms. LEE (PA)	X		
Mr. MOYLAN (GU)		X		Mr. MANNION (NY)	X		
Mr. ONDER (MO)		X		Ms. GRIJALVA (AZ)	X		
Mr. MACKENZIE (PA)		X					
Mr. BAUMGARTNER (WA)		X					
Mr. HARRIS (NC)		X					
Mr. MESSMER (IN)		X					
Mr. FINE (FL)		X					

TOTALS: Ayes: 13

Nos: 19

Not Voting: 5

Total: 37 / Quorum: 32 Report: Failed

(21 R - 16 D)

Date: 3/17/2026

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE RECORD OF COMMITTEE VOTE

Roll Call: 8

Bill: H.R. 7893

Amendment Number: 2

Disposition: Failed by a Full Committee Roll Call Vote

Sponsor/Amendment: Rep. Scott (VA)

SCOTT_FAFSA_SUB_01

Name & State	Aye	No	Not Voting	Name & State	Aye	No	Not Voting
Mr. WALBERG (MI) (Chairman)		X		Mr. SCOTT (VA) (Ranking)	X		
Mr. WILSON (SC)			X	Mr. COURTNEY (CT)	X		
Mrs. FOXX (NC)		X		Ms. WILSON (FL)			X
Mr. THOMPSON (PA)		X		Ms. BONAMICI (OR)	X		
Mr. GROTHMAN (WI)		X		Mr. TAKANO (CA)	X		
Ms. STEFANIK (NY)		X		Ms. ADAMS (NC)	X		
Mr. ALLEN (GA)		X		Mr. DESAULNIER (CA)			X
Mr. COMER (KY)		X		Mr. NORCROSS (NJ)			X
Mr. OWENS (UT)		X		Ms. MCBATH (GA)	X		
Ms. MCCLAIN (MI)		X		Ms. HAYES (CT)	X		
Mrs. MILLER (IL)		X		Ms. OMAR (MN)	X		
Ms. LETLOW (LA)			X	Ms. STEVENS (MI)	X		
Mr. KILEY (CA)		X		Mr. CASAR (TX)	X		
Mr. RULLI (OH)		X		Ms. LEE (PA)	X		
Mr. MOYLAN (GU)		X		Mr. MANNION (NY)	X		
Mr. ONDER (MO)		X		Ms. GRIJALVA (AZ)	X		
Mr. MACKENZIE (PA)		X					
Mr. BAUMGARTNER (WA)		X					
Mr. HARRIS (NC)		X					
Mr. MESSMER (IN)		X					
Mr. FINE (FL)		X					

TOTALS: Ayes: 13

Nos: 19

Not Voting: 5

Total: 37 / Quorum: 32 Report: Failed

(21 R - 16 D)

Date: 3/17/2026

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE RECORD OF COMMITTEE VOTE

Roll Call: 9

Bill: H.R. 7893

Amendment Number: N/A

Disposition: Adopted by a Full Committee Roll Call Vote

Sponsor/Amendment: Motion to report bill; as amended

Rep. Walberg (MI)

Name & State	Aye	No	Not Voting	Name & State	Aye	No	Not Voting
Mr. WALBERG (MI) (Chairman)	X			Mr. SCOTT (VA) (Ranking)		X	
Mr. WILSON (SC)			X	Mr. COURTNEY (CT)		X	
Mrs. FOXX (NC)	X			Ms. WILSON (FL)			X
Mr. THOMPSON (PA)	X			Ms. BONAMICI (OR)		X	
Mr. GROTHMAN (WI)	X			Mr. TAKANO (CA)		X	
Ms. STEFANIK (NY)	X			Ms. ADAMS (NC)		X	
Mr. ALLEN (GA)	X			Mr. DESAULNIER (CA)			X
Mr. COMER (KY)	X			Mr. NORCROSS (NJ)			X
Mr. OWENS (UT)	X			Ms. MCBATH (GA)		X	
Ms. MCCLAIN (MI)	X			Ms. HAYES (CT)		X	
Mrs. MILLER (IL)	X			Ms. OMAR (MN)		X	
Ms. LETLOW (LA)			X	Ms. STEVENS (MI)		X	
Mr. KILEY (CA)	X			Mr. CASAR (TX)		X	
Mr. RULLI (OH)	X			Ms. LEE (PA)		X	
Mr. MOYLAN (GU)	X			Mr. MANNION (NY)		X	
Mr. ONDER (MO)	X			Ms. GRIJALVA (AZ)		X	
Mr. MACKENZIE (PA)	X						
Mr. BAUMGARTNER (WA)	X						
Mr. HARRIS (NC)	X						
Mr. MESSMER (IN)	X						
Mr. FINE (FL)	X						

TOTALS: Ayes: 19

Nos: 13

Not Voting: 5

Total: 37 / Quorum: 32 / Report: Passed

(21 R - 16 D)

STATEMENT OF GENERAL PERFORMANCE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

In accordance with clause (3)(c) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the goal of H.R. 7893 is to improve the process for the verification of Social Security Numbers (SSN) required to be provided to the Secretary of Education for federal student aid.

DUPLICATION OF FEDERAL PROGRAMS

No provision of H.R. 7893 establishes or reauthorizes a program of the Federal Government known to be duplicative of another Federal program, a program that was included in any report from the Government Accountability Office to Congress pursuant to section 21 of Public Law 111–139, or a program related to a program identified in the most recent Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance.

STATEMENT OF OVERSIGHT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE

In compliance with clause 3(c)(1) of rule XIII and clause 2(b)(1) of rule X of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee's oversight findings and recommendations are reflected in the body of this report.

REQUIRED COMMITTEE HEARING

In compliance with clause 3(c)(6) of rule XIII the following hearing held during the 119th Congress was used to develop or consider H.R. 7893: On September 16, 2025, the Committee's Higher Education and Workforce Development Subcommittee held a hearing on "No More Surprises: Reforming College Pricing for Students and Families."

NEW BUDGET AUTHORITY AND CBO COST ESTIMATE

With respect to the requirements of clause 3(c)(2) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives and section 308(a) of the *Congressional Budget Act of 1974* and with respect to requirements of clause 3(c)(3) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives and section 402 of the *Congressional Budget Act of 1974*, a cost estimate was not made available to the Committee in time for the filing of this report. The Chairman of the Committee shall cause such estimate to be printed in the Congressional Record upon its receipt by the Committee.

COMMITTEE COST ESTIMATE

Clause 3(d)(1) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives requires an estimate and a comparison of the costs that would be incurred in carrying out H.R. 7893. However, clause 3(d)(2)(B) of that Rule provides that this requirement does not apply when, as with the present report, the Committee has requested a cost estimate for the bill from the Director of the Congressional Budget Office.

CHANGES IN EXISTING LAW MADE BY THE BILL, AS REPORTED

In compliance with clause 3(e) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, changes in existing law made by the bill, as reported, are shown as follows (existing law proposed to be omitted is enclosed in black brackets, new matter is printed in italics, and existing law in which no change is proposed is shown in roman):

HIGHER EDUCATION ACT OF 1965

* * * * *

TITLE IV—STUDENT ASSISTANCE

* * * * *

PART G—GENERAL PROVISIONS RELATING TO STUDENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

* * * * *

SEC. 484. STUDENT ELIGIBILITY.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—In order to receive any grant, loan, or work assistance under this title, a student must—

(1) be enrolled or accepted for enrollment in a degree, certificate, or other program (including a program of study abroad approved for credit by the eligible institution at which such student is enrolled) leading to a recognized educational credential at an institution of higher education that is an eligible institution in accordance with the provisions of section 487, except as provided in subsections (b)(3) and (b)(4), and not be enrolled in an elementary or secondary school;

(2) if the student is presently enrolled at an institution, be maintaining satisfactory progress in the course of study the student is pursuing in accordance with the provisions of subsection (c);

(3) not owe a refund on grants previously received at any institution under this title, or be in default on any loan from a student loan fund at any institution provided for in part E, or a loan made, insured, or guaranteed by the Secretary under this title for attendance at any institution;

(4) file with the Secretary, as part of the original financial aid application process, a certification, which need not be notarized, but which shall include—

(A) a statement of educational purpose stating that the money attributable to such grant, loan, or loan guarantee will be used solely for expenses related to attendance or continued attendance at such institution; and

(B) such student's social security number;

(5) be a citizen or national of the United States, a permanent resident of the United States, or able to provide evidence from the Immigration and Naturalization Service that he or she is in the United States for other than a temporary purpose with the intention of becoming a citizen or permanent resident; and

(6) if the student has been convicted of, or has pled *nolo contendere* or guilty to, a crime involving fraud in obtaining funds under this title, have completed the repayment of such

funds to the Secretary, or to the holder in the case of a loan under this title obtained by fraud.

(b) ELIGIBILITY FOR STUDENT LOANS.—(1) In order to be eligible to receive any loan under this title (other than a loan under section 428B or 428C, or under section 428H pursuant to an exercise of discretion under section 479A) for any period of enrollment, a student who is not a graduate or professional student (as defined in regulations of the Secretary), and who is enrolled in a program at an institution which has a participation agreement with the Secretary to make awards under subpart 1 of part A of this title, shall—

(A)(i) have received a determination of eligibility or ineligibility for a Pell Grant under such subpart 1 for such period of enrollment; and (ii) if determined to be eligible, have filed an application for a Pell Grant for such enrollment period; or

(B) have (A) filed an application with the Pell Grant processor for such institution for such enrollment period, and (B) received from the financial aid administrator of the institution a preliminary determination of the student's eligibility or ineligibility for a grant under such subpart 1.

(2) In order to be eligible to receive any loan under section 428A for any period of enrollment, a student shall—

(A) have received a determination of need for a loan under section 428(a)(2)(B) of this title;

(B) if determined to have need for a loan under section 428, have applied for such a loan; and

(C) has applied for a loan under section 428H, if such student is eligible to apply for such a loan.

(3) A student who—

(A) is carrying at least one-half the normal full-time work load for the course of study that the student is pursuing, as determined by an eligible institution, and

(B) is enrolled in a course of study necessary for enrollment in a program leading to a degree or certificate,

shall be, notwithstanding paragraph (1) of subsection (a), eligible to apply for loans under part B or D of this title. The eligibility described in this paragraph shall be restricted to one 12-month period.

(4) A student who—

(A) is carrying at least one-half the normal full-time work load for the course of study the student is pursuing, as determined by the institution, and

(B) is enrolled or accepted for enrollment in a program at an eligible institution necessary for a professional credential or certification from a State that is required for employment as a teacher in an elementary or secondary school in that State,

shall be, notwithstanding paragraph (1) of subsection (a), eligible to apply for loans under part B, D, or E or work-study assistance under part C of this title.

(5) Notwithstanding any other provision of this subsection, no incarcerated student is eligible to receive a loan under this title.

(c) SATISFACTORY PROGRESS.—(1) For the purpose of subsection (a)(2), a student is maintaining satisfactory progress if—

(A) the institution at which the student is in attendance, reviews the progress of the student at the end of each academic year, or its equivalent, as determined by the institution, and

(B) the student has a cumulative C average, or its equivalent or academic standing consistent with the requirements for graduation, as determined by the institution, at the end of the second such academic year.

(2) Whenever a student fails to meet the eligibility requirements of subsection (a)(2) as a result of the application of this subsection and subsequent to that failure the student has academic standing consistent with the requirements for graduation, as determined by the institution, for any grading period, the student may, subject to this subsection, again be eligible under subsection (a)(2) for a grant, loan, or work assistance under this title.

(3) Any institution of higher education at which the student is in attendance may waive the provisions of paragraph (1) or paragraph (2) of this subsection for undue hardship based on—

(A) the death of a relative of the student,

(B) the personal injury or illness of the student, or

(C) special circumstances as determined by the institution.

(d) STUDENTS WHO ARE NOT HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES.—

(1) STUDENT ELIGIBILITY.—In order for a student who does not have a certificate of graduation from a school providing secondary education, or the recognized equivalent of such certificate, to be eligible for any assistance under subparts 1, 3, and 4 of part A and parts B, C, D, and E of this title, the student shall meet the requirements of one of the following subparagraphs:

(A) The student is enrolled in an eligible career pathway program and meets one of the following standards:

(i) The student shall take an independently administered examination and shall achieve a score, specified by the Secretary, demonstrating that such student can benefit from the education or training being offered. Such examination shall be approved by the Secretary on the basis of compliance with such standards for development, administration, and scoring as the Secretary may prescribe in regulations.

(ii) The student shall be determined as having the ability to benefit from the education or training in accordance with such process as the State shall prescribe. Any such process described or approved by a State for the purposes of this section shall be effective 6 months after the date of submission to the Secretary unless the Secretary disapproves such process. In determining whether to approve or disapprove such process, the Secretary shall take into account the effectiveness of such process in enabling students without secondary school diplomas or the equivalent thereof to benefit from the instruction offered by institutions utilizing such process, and shall also take into account the cultural diversity, economic circumstances, and educational preparation of the populations served by the institutions.

(iii) The student shall be determined by the institution of higher education as having the ability to benefit from the education or training offered by the institution of higher education upon satisfactory completion of 6 credit hours or the equivalent coursework that are applicable toward a degree or certificate offered by the institution of higher education.

(B) The student has completed a secondary school education in a home school setting that is treated as a home school or private school under State law.

(2) ELIGIBLE CAREER PATHWAY PROGRAM.—In this subsection, the term “eligible career pathway program” means a program that combines rigorous and high-quality education, training, and other services that—

(A) aligns with the skill needs of industries in the economy of the State or regional economy involved;

(B) prepares an individual to be successful in any of a full range of secondary or postsecondary education options, including apprenticeships registered under the Act of August 16, 1937 (commonly known as the “National Apprenticeship Act”; 50 Stat. 664, chapter 663; 29 U.S.C. 50 et seq.) (referred to individually in this Act as an “apprenticeship”, except in section 171);

(C) includes counseling to support an individual in achieving the individual’s education and career goals;

(D) includes, as appropriate, education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster;

(E) organizes education, training, and other services to meet the particular needs of an individual in a manner that accelerates the educational and career advancement of the individual to the extent practicable;

(F) enables an individual to attain a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and at least 1 recognized postsecondary credential; and

(G) helps an individual enter or advance within a specific occupation or occupational cluster.

(e) CERTIFICATION FOR GSL ELIGIBILITY.—Each eligible institution may certify student eligibility for a loan by an eligible lender under part B of this title prior to completing the review for accuracy of the information submitted by the applicant required by regulations issued under this title, if—

(1) checks for the loans are mailed to the eligible institution prior to disbursements;

(2) the disbursement is not made until the review is complete; and

(3) the eligible institution has no evidence or documentation on which the institution may base a determination that the information submitted by the applicant is incorrect.

(f) LOSS OF ELIGIBILITY FOR VIOLATION OF LOAN LIMITS.—(1) No student shall be eligible to receive any grant, loan, or work assistance under this title if the eligible institution determines that the student fraudulently borrowed in violation of the annual loan limits under part B, part D, or part E of this title in the same aca-

demic year, or if the student fraudulently borrowed in excess of the aggregate maximum loan limits under such part B, part D, or part E.

(2) If the institution determines that the student inadvertently borrowed amounts in excess of such annual or aggregate maximum loan limits, such institution shall allow the student to repay any amount borrowed in excess of such limits prior to certifying the student's eligibility for further assistance under this title.

(g) VERIFICATION OF IMMIGRATION STATUS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall implement a system under which the statements and supporting documentation, if required, of an individual declaring that such individual is in compliance with the requirements of subsection (a)(5) shall be verified prior to the individual's receipt of a grant, loan, or work assistance under this title.

(2) SPECIAL RULE.—The documents collected and maintained by an eligible institution in the admission of a student to the institution may be used by the student in lieu of the documents used to establish both employment authorization and identity under section 274A(b)(1)(B) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1324a) to verify eligibility to participate in work-study programs under part C of this title.

(3) VERIFICATION MECHANISMS.—The Secretary is authorized to verify such statements and supporting documentation through a data match, using an automated or other system, with other Federal agencies that may be in possession of information relevant to such statements and supporting documentation.

(4) REVIEW.—In the case of such an individual who is not a citizen or national of the United States, if the statement described in paragraph (1) is submitted but the documentation required under paragraph (2) is not presented or if the documentation required under paragraph (2)(A) is presented but such documentation is not verified under paragraph (3)—

(A) the institution—

(i) shall provide a reasonable opportunity to submit to the institution evidence indicating a satisfactory immigration status, and

(ii) may not delay, deny, reduce, or terminate the individual's eligibility for the grant, loan, or work assistance on the basis of the individual's immigration status until such a reasonable opportunity has been provided; and

(B) if there are submitted documents which the institution determines constitute reasonable evidence indicating such status—

(i) the institution shall transmit to the Immigration and Naturalization Service either photostatic or other similar copies of such documents, or information from such documents, as specified by the Immigration and Naturalization Service, for official verification,

(ii) pending such verification, the institution may not delay, deny, reduce, or terminate the individual's eligibility for the grant, loan, or work assistance on the basis of the individual's immigration status, and

(iii) the institution shall not be liable for the consequences of any action, delay, or failure of the Service to conduct such verification.

(h) LIMITATIONS OF ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS AGAINST INSTITUTIONS.—The Secretary shall not take any compliance, disallowance, penalty, or other regulatory action against an institution of higher education with respect to any error in the institution's determination to make a student eligible for a grant, loan, or work assistance based on citizenship or immigration status—

(1) if the institution has provided such eligibility based on a verification of satisfactory immigration status by the Immigration and Naturalization Service,

(2) because the institution, under subsection (g)(4)(A)(i), was required to provide a reasonable opportunity to submit documentation, or

(3) because the institution, under subsection (g)(4)(B)(i), was required to wait for the response of the Immigration and Naturalization Service to the institution's request for official verification of the immigration status of the student.

(i) VALIDITY OF LOAN GUARANTEES FOR LOAN PAYMENTS MADE BEFORE IMMIGRATION STATUS VERIFICATION COMPLETED.—Notwithstanding subsection (h), if—

(1) a guaranty is made under this title for a loan made with respect to an individual,

(2) at the time the guaranty is entered into, the provisions of subsection (h) had been complied with,

(3) amounts are paid under the loan subject to such guaranty, and

(4) there is a subsequent determination that, because of an unsatisfactory immigration status, the individual is not eligible for the loan,

the official of the institution making the determination shall notify and instruct the entity making the loan to cease further payments under the loan, but such guaranty shall not be voided or otherwise nullified with respect to such payments made before the date the entity receives the notice.

(k) SPECIAL RULE FOR CORRESPONDENCE COURSES.—A student shall not be eligible to receive grant, loan, or work assistance under this title for a correspondence course unless such course is part of a program leading to an associate, bachelor or graduate degree.

(l) COURSES OFFERED THROUGH DISTANCE EDUCATION.—

(1) RELATION TO CORRESPONDENCE COURSES.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—A student enrolled in a course of instruction at an institution of higher education that is offered principally through distance education and leads to a recognized certificate, or recognized associate, recognized baccalaureate, or recognized graduate degree, conferred by such institution, shall not be considered to be enrolled in correspondence courses.

(B) EXCEPTION.—An institution of higher education referred to in subparagraph (A) shall not include an institution or school described in section 3(3)(C) of the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006.

(2) REDUCTIONS OF FINANCIAL AID.—A student's eligibility to receive grants, loans, or work assistance under this title shall

be reduced if a financial aid officer determines under the discretionary authority provided in section 479A that distance education results in a substantially reduced cost of attendance to such student.

(3) SPECIAL RULE.—For award years beginning prior to July 1, 2008, the Secretary shall not take any compliance, disallowance, penalty, or other action based on a violation of this subsection against a student or an eligible institution when such action arises out of such institution's prior award of student assistance under this title if the institution demonstrates to the satisfaction of the Secretary that its course of instruction would have been in conformance with the requirements of this subsection.

(m) STUDENTS WITH A FIRST BACCALAUREATE OR PROFESSIONAL DEGREE.—A student shall not be ineligible for assistance under parts B, C, D, and E of this title because such student has previously received a baccalaureate or professional degree.

(n) STUDY ABROAD.—Nothing in this Act shall be construed to limit or otherwise prohibit access to study abroad programs approved by the home institution at which a student is enrolled. An otherwise eligible student who is engaged in a program of study abroad approved for academic credit by the home institution at which the student is enrolled shall be eligible to receive grant, loan, or work assistance under this title, without regard to whether such study abroad program is required as part of the student's degree program.

(o) VERIFICATION OF SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER.—[The Secretary of Education, in cooperation with the Commissioner of the Social Security Administration, shall verify any social security number provided by a student to an eligible institution under subsection (a)(4) and shall enforce the following conditions] *Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary of Education, in cooperation with the Commissioner of the Social Security Administration, shall verify the social security number and citizenship status of any individual that is required to be provided to the Secretary for Federal student aid under sections 483, 484(a), and 494, and shall enforce the following conditions:*

(1) Except as provided in paragraphs (2) and (3), an institution shall not deny, reduce, delay, or terminate a student's eligibility for assistance under this part because social security number verification is pending.

(2) If there is a determination by the Secretary that the social security number provided to an eligible institution by a student is incorrect, the institution shall deny or terminate the student's eligibility for any grant, loan, or work assistance under this title until such time as the student provides documented evidence of a social security number that is determined by the institution to be correct.

(3) If there is a determination by the Secretary that the social security number provided to an eligible institution by a student is incorrect, and a correct social security number cannot be provided by such student, and a loan has been guaranteed for such student under part B of this title, the institution shall notify and instruct the lender and guaranty agency making and guaranteeing the loan, respectively, to cease further

disbursements of the loan, but such guaranty shall not be voided or otherwise nullified with respect to such disbursements made before the date that the lender and the guaranty agency receives such notice.

(4) Nothing in this subsection shall permit the Secretary to take any compliance, disallowance, penalty, or other regulatory action against—

(A) any institution of higher education with respect to any error in a social security number, unless such error was a result of fraud on the part of the institution; or

(B) any student with respect to any error in a social security number, unless such error was a result of fraud on the part of the student.

(p) **USE OF INCOME DATA WITH IRS.**—The Secretary, in cooperation with the Secretary of the Treasury, shall fulfill the data transfer requirements under section 6103(l)(13) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and the procedure and requirements outlined in section 494.

(q) **STUDENTS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES.**—

(1) **DEFINITIONS.**—In this subsection the terms “comprehensive transition and postsecondary program for students with intellectual disabilities” and “student with an intellectual disability” have the meanings given the terms in section 760.

(2) **REQUIREMENTS.**—Notwithstanding subsections (a), (c), and (d), in order to receive any grant or work assistance under section 401, subpart 3 of part A, or part C, a student with an intellectual disability shall—

(A) be enrolled or accepted for enrollment in a comprehensive transition and postsecondary program for students with intellectual disabilities at an institution of higher education;

(B) be maintaining satisfactory progress in the program as determined by the institution, in accordance with standards established by the institution; and

(C) meet the requirements of paragraphs (3), (4), (5), and (6) of subsection (a).

(3) **AUTHORITY.**—Notwithstanding any other provision of law unless such provision is enacted with specific reference to this section, the Secretary is authorized to waive any statutory provision applicable to the student financial assistance programs under section 401, subpart 3 of part A, or part C (other than a provision of part F related to such a program), or any institutional eligibility provisions of this title, as the Secretary determines necessary to ensure that programs enrolling students with intellectual disabilities otherwise determined to be eligible under this subsection may receive such financial assistance.

(4) **REGULATIONS.**—Notwithstanding regulations applicable to grant or work assistance awards made under section 401, subpart 3 of part A, and part C (other than a regulation under part F related to such an award), including with respect to eligible programs, instructional time, credit status, and enrollment status as described in section 481, the Secretary shall promulgate regulations allowing programs enrolling students

with intellectual disabilities otherwise determined to be eligible under this subsection to receive such awards.

(r) DATA ANALYSIS ON ACCESS TO FEDERAL STUDENT AID FOR CERTAIN POPULATIONS.—

(1) DEVELOPMENT OF THE SYSTEM.—Within one year of enactment of the Higher Education Opportunity Act, the Secretary shall analyze data from the FAFSA containing information regarding the number, characteristics, and circumstances of students denied Federal student aid based on a drug conviction while receiving Federal aid.

(2) RESULTS FROM ANALYSIS.—The results from the analysis of such information shall be made available on a continuous basis via the Department website and the Digest of Education Statistics.

(3) DATA UPDATING.—The data analyzed under this subsection shall be updated at the beginning of each award year and at least one additional time during such award year.

(4) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—The Secretary shall prepare and submit to the authorizing committees, in each fiscal year, a report describing the results obtained by the establishment and operation of the data system authorized by this subsection.

(s) EXCEPTION TO REQUIRED REGISTRATION WITH THE SELECTIVE SERVICE SYSTEM.—Notwithstanding section 12(f) of the Military Selective Service Act (50 U.S.C. 3811(f)), an individual shall not be ineligible for assistance or a benefit provided under this title if the individual is required under section 3 of such Act (50 U.S.C. 3802) to present himself for and submit to registration under such section and fails to do so in accordance with any proclamation issued under such section, or in accordance with any rule or regulation issued under such section.

(t) CONFINED OR INCARCERATED INDIVIDUALS.—

(1) DEFINITIONS.—In this subsection:

(A) CONFINED OR INCARCERATED INDIVIDUAL.—The term “confined or incarcerated individual”—

(i) means an individual who is serving a criminal sentence in a Federal, State, or local penal institution, prison, jail, reformatory, work farm, or other similar correctional institution; and

(ii) does not include an individual who is in a half-way house or home detention or is sentenced to serve only weekends.

(B) PRISON EDUCATION PROGRAM.—The term “prison education program” means an education or training program that—

(i) is an eligible program under this title offered by an institution of higher education (as defined in section 101 or 102(a)(1)(B));

(ii) is offered by an institution that has been approved to operate in a correctional facility by the appropriate State department of corrections or other entity that is responsible for overseeing correctional facilities, or by the Bureau of Prisons;

(iii) has been determined by the appropriate State department of corrections or other entity that is responsible for overseeing correctional facilities, or by

the Bureau of Prisons, to be operating in the best interest of students, the determination of which shall be made by the State department of corrections or other entity or by the Bureau of Prisons, respectively, and may be based on—

- (I) rates of confined or incarcerated individuals continuing their education post-release;
 - (II) job placement rates for such individuals;
 - (III) earnings for such individuals;
 - (IV) rates of recidivism for such individuals;
 - (V) the experience, credentials, and rates of turnover or departure of instructors;
 - (VI) the transferability of credits for courses available to confined or incarcerated individuals and the applicability of such credits toward related degree or certificate programs; or
 - (VII) offering relevant academic and career advising services to participating confined or incarcerated individuals while they are confined or incarcerated, in advance of reentry, and upon release;
- (iv) offers transferability of credits to at least 1 institution of higher education (as defined in section 101 or 102(a)(1)(B)) in the State in which the correctional facility is located, or, in the case of a Federal correctional facility, in the State in which most of the individuals confined or incarcerated in such facility will reside upon release;
- (v) is offered by an institution that has not been subject, during the 5 years preceding the date of the determination, to—
- (I) any suspension, emergency action, or termination of programs under this title;
 - (II) any adverse action by the institution's accrediting agency or association; or
 - (III) any action by the State to revoke a license or other authority to operate;
- (vi) satisfies any applicable educational requirements for professional licensure or certification, including licensure or certification examinations needed to practice or find employment in the sectors or occupations for which the program prepares the individual, in the State in which the correctional facility is located or, in the case of a Federal correctional facility, in the State in which most of the individuals confined or incarcerated in such facility will reside upon release; and
- (vii) does not offer education that is designed to lead to licensure or employment for a specific job or occupation in the State if such job or occupation typically involves prohibitions on the licensure or employment of formerly incarcerated individuals in the State in which the correctional facility is located, or, in the case of a Federal correctional facility, in the State in

which most of the individuals confined or incarcerated in such facility will reside upon release.

(2) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.—The Secretary, in collaboration with the Attorney General, shall provide technical assistance and guidance to the Bureau of Prisons, State departments of corrections, and other entities that are responsible for overseeing correctional facilities in making determinations under paragraph (1)(B)(iii).

(3) FEDERAL PELL GRANT ELIGIBILITY.—Notwithstanding subsection (a), in order for a confined or incarcerated individual who otherwise meets the eligibility requirements of this title to be eligible to receive a Federal Pell Grant under section 401, the individual shall be enrolled or accepted for enrollment in a prison education program.

(4) EVALUATION.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of the FAFSA Simplification Act, in order to evaluate and improve the impact of activities supported under this subsection, the Secretary, in partnership with the Director of the Institute of Education Sciences, shall award 1 or more grants or contracts to, or enter into cooperative agreements with, experienced public and private institutions and organizations to enable the institutions and organizations to conduct an external evaluation that shall—

(i) assess the ability of confined or incarcerated individuals to access and complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid;

(ii) examine in-custody outcomes and post-release outcomes related to providing Federal Pell Grants to confined or incarcerated individuals, including—

(I) attainment of a postsecondary degree or credential;

(II) safety in penal institutions with prison education programs;

(III) the size of waiting lists for prison education programs;

(IV) the extent to which such individuals continue their education post-release;

(V) employment and earnings outcomes for such individuals; and

(VI) rates of recidivism for such individuals;

(iii) track individuals who received Federal Pell Grants under subpart 1 of part A at 1, 3, and 5 years after the individuals' release from confinement or incarceration; and

(iv) examine the extent to which institutions provide re-entry or relevant career services to participating confined or incarcerated individuals as part of the prison education program and the efficacy of such services, if offered.

(B) REPORT.—Beginning not later than 1 year after the Secretary awards the grant, contract, or cooperative agreement described in subparagraph (A) and annually thereafter, each institution of higher education operating a pris-

on education program under this subsection shall submit a report to the Secretary on activities assisted and students served under this subsection, which shall include the information, as applicable, contained in clauses (i) through (iv) of subparagraph (A).

(5) REPORT.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of the FAFSA Simplification Act and on at least an annual basis thereafter, the Secretary shall submit to the authorizing committees, and make publicly available on the website of the Department, a report on the—

(A) impact of this subsection which shall include, at a minimum—

(i) the names and types of institutions of higher education offering prison education programs at which confined or incarcerated individuals are enrolled and receiving Federal Pell Grants;

(ii) the number of confined or incarcerated individuals receiving Federal Pell Grants through each prison education program;

(iii) the amount of Federal Pell Grant expenditures for each prison education program;

(iv) the average amount of Federal Pell Grant expenditures per full-time equivalent students in a prison education program compared to the average amount of Federal Pell Grant expenditures per full-time equivalent students not in prison education programs;

(v) the demographics of confined or incarcerated individuals receiving Federal Pell Grants;

(vi) the cost of attendance for such individuals;

(vii) the mode of instruction (such as distance education, in-person instruction, or a combination of such modes) for each prison education program;

(viii) information on the academic outcomes of such individuals (such as credits attempted and earned, and credential and degree completion) and any information available from student satisfaction surveys conducted by the applicable institution or correctional facility;

(ix) information on post-release outcomes of such individuals, including, to the extent practicable, continued postsecondary enrollment, earnings, credit transfer, and job placement;

(x) rates of recidivism for confined or incarcerated individuals receiving Federal Pell Grants;

(xi) information on transfers of confined or incarcerated individuals between prison education programs;

(xii) the most common programs and courses offered in prison education programs; and

(xiii) rates of instructor turnover or departure for courses offered in prison education programs;

(B) results of each prison education program at each institution of higher education, including the information described in clauses (ii) through (xiii) of subparagraph (A); and

(C) findings regarding best practices with respect to prison education programs.

* * * * *

MINORITY VIEWS

INTRODUCTION

H.R. 7893, the *FAFSA Verification Efficiency Act*, amends the *Higher Education Act of 1965* (HEA) to require the Department of Education (Department) to collect and verify the Social Security Numbers (SSNs) and citizenship status of individuals involved in the federal student aid process. While this bill would address statutory gaps in the Department's ability to disburse federal student aid to students in a timely manner, it goes further than needed by unnecessarily verifying students' family members' citizenship status, therefore expanding the Trump Administration's ability to surveille students and families.

FAFSA REFORMS UNDER THE FUTURE ACT

In 2019, Congress passed the *Fostering Undergraduate Talent by Unlocking Resources for Education (FUTURE) Act*.¹ The *FUTURE Act* streamlined the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and student loan repayment by allowing the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) to share students' and borrowers' tax information with the Department to help determine student aid eligibility and loan repayment amounts.² The *FUTURE Act* requires all students and their contributors to the FAFSA form (i.e., parent(s), parent's spouse, and student's spouse) to consent to having their tax information requested directly from the IRS and populated into the FAFSA form. While individuals may choose to opt out of this process, known as the IRS *FUTURE Act* Direct Data Exchange (FA-DDX), those who consent can typically expect a decreased time to complete the FAFSA, since they do not have to input any tax information.

To execute this direct data exchange, the Department must follow strong identity proofing and authentication processes consistent with guidance found in the IRS' Tax Information Security Guidelines.³ Part of this authentication process includes individuals providing a Social Security Number (SSN) on the FAFSA for the Social Security Administration (SSA) to verify an individual's SSN. This is required prior to disbursing federal student aid. However, under current statute, the Department only has the authority to collect and verify SSNs for students⁴ and their parents.⁵ To comply with the *FUTURE Act* and improve the process for students, the Department needs clear statutory authority to collect SSNs of *all* individuals contributing to a student's FAFSA. Cur-

¹ Pub. L. No. 116–91, 133 Stat. 1189, (2020).

² *Id.*

³ Pub. 1075, Tax Information Security Guidelines for Federal, State, and Local Agencies, I.R.S. (last accessed Apr. 21, 2026), <https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p1075.pdf>.

⁴ 20 U.S.C. § 1091(o).

⁵ 20 U.S.C. § 1078–2(f).

rently, contributors who are the student's spouses or stepparents cannot have their SSN verified by the SAA and therefore cannot be processed through the FA-DDX, increasing the time it takes to complete the FAFSA.

CITIZENSHIP VERIFICATION FOR FEDERAL STUDENT AID

Only citizens, permanent residents, or those able to provide evidence that they are in the U.S. with the intent of becoming a citizen or permanent resident are eligible to receive federal student aid under Title IV of the HEA.⁶ The Department must verify a student's citizenship status before they receive any grant, loan, or work assistance under Title IV of the HEA, and does so through data matching agreements with the SSA and Department of Homeland Security (DHS).⁷ The Department has the authority to verify student and borrower citizenship with the SSA via the *FUTURE Act* and with DHS through a Computer Matching Agreement (CMA).⁸ This CMA also clarifies that DHS is allowed to use the Department's citizenship data "for necessary law enforcement investigations or prosecutions by ED and DHS, as appropriate, if the data match uncovers activity that warrants such action (e.g., the use of fraudulent immigration documents)."⁹ The Department has not presented the Committee any evidence that it needs additional clarity around its authority to collect and verify citizenship status of any person applying for student aid.

H.R. 7893 WOULD FIX THE DEPARTMENT'S DATA MATCHING AUTHORITY

H.R. 7893 amends Section 484(o) of the HEA to require the Department, in cooperation with the SSA, to verify the SSN of anyone "that is required to be provided to the Secretary for Federal student aid under sections 483, 484(a), and 494 . . ."¹⁰ This would ensure that the Department is able to verify the SSNs of every contributor, including spouses and parents, which fixes the current gap in statute, and thus speeds up the FAFSA application process for students and contributors through the IRS FA-DDX. While H.R. 7893 would improve the FAFSA process for dependent or married students and their contributors (i.e., the spouse or parents), it doesn't expand federal student aid access for these students, it merely speeds up the process by which they receive aid.

Committee Democrats are committed to ensuring the FAFSA process is smooth for students and families and generally do not have concerns with fixing the SSN verification process for individuals as they complete the FAFSA. However, as detailed below, Committee Democrats have substantial concerns with the inclusion of unnecessarily broad citizenship collection and verification. Ranking Member Scott offered a Democratic Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute (ANS) that would narrowly fix the issue of verifying SSNs without expanding citizenship collection, which was voted down along party lines. If H.R. 7893 only amended the HEA to nar-

⁶ 20 U.S.C. § 1091(a)(5).

⁷ 20 U.S.C. § 1091(g).

⁸ U.S. Dep't of Educ., Matching Agreement Between the Department of Homeland Security-United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (DHS-USCIS) and the United States Department of Education (ED), <https://www.ed.gov/media/document/dhs-cmapdf-91155.pdf>.

⁹ *Id.* at 9.

¹⁰ H.R. 7893, 119th Cong. (2026).

rowly fix the Department’s authority to collect and verify SSNs, the legislation may have received some support by Committee Democrats.

H.R. 7893 EXPANDS SURVEILLANCE OF FAMILIES WITH MIXED IMMIGRATION STATUSES

H.R. 7893 moves drastically beyond fixing the issue of SSN verification by mandating the Department to collect and verify the *citizenship status* of anyone “that is required to be provided to the Secretary for Federal student aid under sections 483, 484(a), and 494 . . .”¹¹ In doing so, the bill would open the doors to very concerning federal data collection on citizenship status that outweighs any potential FAFSA improvements.

Students from families with mixed immigration status are already experiencing a chilling effect when applying for student aid “amid the Trump administration’s mass deportation campaign.”¹² H.R. 7893 would exacerbate these fears with concerns that this new citizenship verification will be used by the Trump Administration for further unlawful immigration enforcement. The bill alarmingly allows the Department to collect and verify the citizenship status of *any* FAFSA contributor, regardless of whether that individual is applying for federal student aid. However, the Department has no legitimate need to collect and verify citizenship status for anyone except students applying for federal student aid and parents applying for Parent PLUS loans. Ranking Member Scott offered an amendment to prohibit the use of FAFSA data for immigration enforcement and to prohibit the collection of citizenship status for any purpose other than federal student aid eligibility. The amendment was voted down along party lines and dismissed as unnecessary by Committee Republicans. Without narrowing the language, H.R. 7893 would put many mixed-status families at risk and deter students from accessing higher education.

Committee Democrats have strong concerns that the authority given to the Department in H.R. 7893 will be used by the Trump Administration in its continuing efforts to target law-abiding individuals for immigration enforcement. Prevalent¹³ and unpopular¹⁴ immigration enforcement across the country suggests the Trump Administration might weaponize citizenship data on students’ parents and spouses consistent with their other efforts. Regardless of immigration status, the increased immigration enforcement across the country is negatively impacting many students, staff, and faculty and has perpetuated punitive policies across higher education.¹⁵ For example, while some state legislatures are choosing to

¹¹ *Id.*

¹² Johanna Alonso, *Trump’s Deportation Campaign Raises FAFSA Privacy Concerns, Advocates Say*, Inside Higher Ed (Oct. 31, 2025), <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/students/diversity/2025/10/31/trumps-deportation-campaign-raises-fafsa-privacy-concerns>.

¹³ Graeme Blair & David Hausman, *One Year of Immigration Enforcement Under the Second Trump Administration*, Deportation Data Proj. (Apr. 7, 2026), <https://deportationdata.org/analysis/immigration-enforcement-first-year.html>.

¹⁴ Matt Loffman, Poll: *Nearly two-thirds of Americans say ICE has gone too far in immigration crackdown*, PBS (Feb. 5, 2026), <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/politics/poll-nearly-two-thirds-of-americans-say-ice-has-gone-too-far-in-immigration-crackdown>.

¹⁵ See e.g., Wil Del Pilar, *The Politics of Exclusion: How Trump’s Immigration Policies Affect College Access*, (Feb. 17, 2025), <https://edtrust.org/blog/how-trumps-immigration-policies-affect-college-access/> and Josh Moody, *DHS Targeted Students for Protected Speech*, Inside Higher Ed

limit accessible and affordable higher education for undocumented students,¹⁶ the Trump Administration has chosen to investigate other states for providing these students financial aid.¹⁷ Meanwhile, colleges are seeing a drastic drop in international students due to visa challenges and fears of deportation.¹⁸ Congress must not further exacerbate these harms to students and colleges through legislation.

Beyond higher education, the Trump Administration has encroached on protected data to support their immigration enforcement agenda. For example, in 2025, the Trump Administration pushed the Internal Revenue Service to illegally share private taxpayer data with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).¹⁹ The Trump Administration has also “sought to use personal data from other agencies to assist in its deportation efforts, including requesting state voter rolls, public housing data . . . and records of who applied for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.”²⁰ Committee Democrats have significant apprehension in trusting the Trump Administration to not misuse citizenship data on federal student aid account users at a time when violent immigration enforcement is rampant across the country, including in educational spaces. This bill has the potential to exacerbate the chilling effect of the Trump Administration’s immigration enforcement efforts and authoritarian attempts to weaponize data.

DEMOCRATIC AMENDMENTS OFFERED DURING MARKUP OF H.R. 7893

Committee Democrats put forward two amendments to improve the bill and protect individuals’ citizenship status. These amendments would have enabled the Department to fully implement the FA-DDX while ensuring that the Trump Administration could not weaponize the HEA to hurt students and separate families. Committee Republicans rejected both Democratic amendments that were considered.

Amendment	Offered By	Description	Action Taken
#1	Mr. Scott	Democratic Substitute to the Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute.	Defeated

(Jan. 26, 2026), <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/politics/poll-nearly-two-thirds-of-americans-say-ice-has-gone-too-far-in-immigration-crackdown>.

¹⁶ See, e.g., Micaela McConnell & Steven Hubbard, *The Fight Over In-State Tuition for Undocumented Students*, Amer. Immigration Council (Sep. 19, 2025), <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/blog/fight-over-in-state-tuition-undocumented-students/>.

¹⁷ Naaz Modan, *DOJ targets college access for undocumented students in 6th lawsuit*, K-12 Dive (Nov. 21, 2025), <https://www.k12dive.com/news/doj-sued-6-states-undocumented-students-scholarships-tuition-california/806235/>.

¹⁸ From June to August 2025, the number of student visas issued declined by more than 100,000 from the previous summer. Johanna Alonso & Katherine Knott, *New Student Visas Dropped 35.6% Last Summer*, Inside Higher Ed (Mar. 10, 2026), <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/global/international-students-us/2026/03/10/new-student-visas-dropped-356-last-summer>; Annie Ma et al., *Visa cancellations and deportations sow panic for international students*, PBS (Apr. 16, 2025), <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/politics/visa-cancellations-and-deportations-sow-panic-for-international-students>.

¹⁹ Press Release, Democracy Forward, IRS Admits It Illegally Shared Taxpayer Data with ICE, Bringing New Urgency in Ongoing Case to Protect American’s Sensitive Information (Feb. 13, 2026), <https://democracyforward.org/news/press-releases/irs-admits-it-illegally-shared-taxpayer-data-with-ice-bringing-new-urgency-in-ongoing-case-to-protect-americans-sensitive-information/>.

²⁰ Alonso, *supra* note 12.

Amendment	Offered By	Description	Action Taken
#2	Mr. Scott	Prohibits collection of unnecessary citizenship data and prevents the use of FAFSA data for immigration enforcement.	Defeated

CONCLUSION

Committee Democrats are committed to ensuring all students have access to federal student aid through a well-functioning FAFSA process. That access should never come at the expense of the safety and well-being of mixed-status families and noncitizens currently being attacked by the Trump Administration. For the reasons stated above, Committee Democrats unanimously opposed H.R. 7893 when the Committee on Education and Workforce considered it on March 17, 2026. We urge the House of Representatives to do the same unless the legislation is amended to narrowly focus on verifying the SSNs of students and their contributors.

ROBERT C. “BOBBY” SCOTT,
Ranking Member.
 FREDERICA S. WILSON,
 SUZANNE BONAMICI,
 MARK TAKANO,
 MARK DESAULNIER,
 JAHANA HAYES,
 SUMMER L. LEE,
 ADELITA GRIJALVA,
Members of Congress.

