

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 11, 2017

COMMITTEES:
APPROPRIATIONS
FOREIGN RELATIONS
SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE
SMALL BUSINESS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP
SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING

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

Dear Secretary DeVos:

Thank for your continued leadership in response to Hurricane Irma and your efforts to aid Americans in Florida, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands and elsewhere. Your department's efforts are critical to ensuring a rapid, effective response to this disaster that will span multiple agencies.

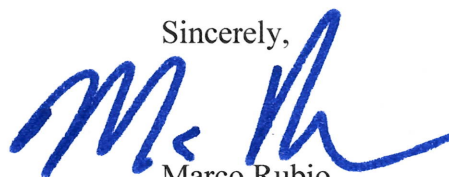
I appreciate and commend your coordination with state and local governments which will ensure they are able to quickly respond to Floridians as they begin to assess and recover from this catastrophic storm. It is not yet clear when Florida's student populations will be able to return to the classrooms, but I stand ready to work with your department to support those who have been displaced continue their education as quickly as possible. Realizing lives have been upended and that many people will be unable to return to work while the recovery and rebuilding process begins, I encourage the Department of Education to work with student loan borrowers to help ease the burden of meeting federal student loan debt repayment deadlines. I also request the department work with the Florida Department of Education to ensure eligible Floridians are aware of any and all available assistance through Project SERV grants.

As you know, the department is able to provide relief in the form of a 90 day forbearance to a borrower in repayment who is affected by a natural disaster. Hurricane Irma will cause varying levels of destruction and displacement for Floridians throughout the state, many of whom have student loans. I believe it is prudent for the federal government to ease the burden for these borrowers. This will be a complicated undertaking and I strongly encourage the department to coordinate with relevant state and local agencies, borrowers and other Florida stakeholders to coordinate a plan to disseminate this important information.

Any proactive measures your department can provide to borrowers and institutions of higher education in the wake of Hurricane Irma would be greatly appreciated. I look forward to working with you to ensure that the students and families in Florida recover from Hurricane Irma.

Thank you for your attention to these matters.

Sincerely,



Marco Rubio
U.S. Senator