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Hawaii Attorney General Joins 20-State Coalition Urging U.S. House Committees to Protect Student Veterans from Exploitation by For-Profit Schools

Honolulu – Attorney General Clare E. Connors, along with 19 other state attorneys general, today submitted a statement for consideration during a joint field hearing of the U.S. House Education and Labor and Veterans Affairs Committees scheduled for this afternoon at 1:30 p.m. EST (10:30 a.m. PST) in El Cajon, California.

The coalition’s statement emphasizes concerns of the attorneys general that student veterans are disproportionately harmed by for-profit colleges and universities that violate state laws put in place to protect students and that increasing numbers of institutions are converting to “non-profit” entities but retaining business models that essentially keep profit-making arrangements in place, including the incentive to use the same predatory recruitment and retention tactics of for-profit companies.

The attorneys general argue that student veterans are at greater risk of being harmed due to loopholes in federal laws that entice for-profit schools to heavily market to veterans—often using high-pressure and deceptive sales tactics. As a result, veterans are disproportionately harmed when these schools violate consumer protection laws, offer low-quality or inadequate certificate and degree programs, or close abruptly leaving students burdened with heavy debt and low prospects for gainful employment.

“It is unacceptable that veterans are primary targets of deceptive sales tactics and other abuse committed by for-profit colleges,” said Attorney General Connors. “Converting from a for-profit college to a non-profit in name only is a deceptive practice that must be addressed.”

In their statement, the attorneys general also outline the multiple efforts they have undertaken to protect students and loan borrowers, including investigations and enforcement actions brought against several for-profit schools and opposing attempts by the U.S. Department of Education (ED) to dismantle federal regulations that guard

against abuses by for-profit schools. The ED has also refused to help defrauded students obtain federal loan forgiveness, failed to institute protections for students of for-profit schools that abruptly close, and has limited sharing student loan information with attorneys general. The long-standing practice of information sharing has been vital to state efforts to protect consumers from illegal, unfair, abusive, or deceptive practices in the higher education industry.

In addition to Hawaii, the statement is signed by the attorneys general of California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Illinois, Iowa, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, New York, North Carolina, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Washington.

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