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Hawaii Attorney General Calls On U.S. Secretary of Education To Further Address Student Loan Crisis

HONOLULU — Hawaii Attorney General Clare E. Connors today joined a coalition of 23 attorneys general, led by Pennsylvania Attorney General Josh Shapiro and Colorado Attorney General Phil Weiser, in issuing a letter to the U.S. Secretary of Education Dr. Miguel Cardona urging additional reforms to ease the process of paying student loans and protect student loan borrowers from paying back debt to for-profit and defunct colleges.

“The student loan crisis requires a thoughtful response that places the focus on helping students,” said Attorney General Connors. “Reforms are needed to make it easier for students in our community to pay what they owe, while not upending their lives.”

In their letter, the attorneys general urged Secretary Cardona to consider several policy actions that would help student loan borrowers, including:

- Continuing the policy of suspending student loan payments and waiving interest for as long as necessary to support struggling borrowers;
- Continuing the policy of suspending of involuntary collections activities, as well as authorizing suspended payments to count towards both Public Service Loan Forgiveness and income-driven repayment (IDR) plan forgiveness;
- Enacting reforms so that student loan borrowers are able to access and remain in IDR plans to which they are entitled, enabling borrowers to have more affordable monthly payments, to avoid the serious consequences of default, and to secure loan forgiveness when appropriate; and
- Enforcing the gainful employment requirement of the Higher Education Act, which would shield borrowers from for-profit programs that fail to prepare students for careers.

The letter applauded the Department’s March 30 actions to expand pandemic protections to privately-owned loans. The attorneys general also welcomed President Biden’s commitment to consider using executive authority to cancel student debt, saying

“...we strongly urge that any debt cancellation should apply to all federal loans – including Federal Family Education Loans and Perkins loans that are not owned by the Department... For many with student debt, the current system is highly complex and difficult to manage. This is a needless source of great anxiety and is plainly unfair. We can and must do better.”

The letter was issued by Pennsylvania Attorney General Josh Shapiro and Colorado Attorney General Phil Weiser, who were joined by the attorneys general of California, Connecticut, District of Columbia, Delaware, Iowa, Illinois, Massachusetts, Maryland, Maine, Minnesota, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Nevada, North Carolina, Oregon, Virginia, Vermont, Washington and Wisconsin.

A copy of the letter can be found [here](#).

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