



Durbin Urges Illinois Education Professionals To Sound The Alarm On For-Profit Colleges

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SPRINGFIELD – With high school seniors making decisions about their plans for higher education during the COVID-19 pandemic, U.S. Senate Majority Whip Dick Durbin (D-IL) is enlisting the help of Illinois high school principals, counselors, and teachers to warn college-bound students and their families about the risks associated with attending for-profit colleges. As the COVID-19 pandemic has shifted in-person learning, a report from the National Student Clearing House found that private for-profit colleges saw an enrollment increase of 3.9 percent this spring, the only sector in higher education to see an increase in enrollment from Spring 2020. These for-profit colleges enroll only eight percent of post-secondary students, but account for 30 percent of all federal student loan defaults. In today’s letter, Durbin said for-profit colleges have “proven themselves to be a direct threat” to Illinois educators’ efforts to prepare students for better opportunities through education.

“Ensuring the value of post-secondary education is an essential consideration for students and families. For-profit colleges have taken advantage of the uncertainty and disruption we’ve experienced this year to exploit people just trying to get an education,” said Durbin. “In the last several years, several major for-profit college companies have collapsed under the weight of their own wrongdoing... When they closed abruptly, hundreds of thousands of students across the country—including thousands in Illinois—were left in the lurch. These closures put students at risk of having their education disrupted, losing credits when they start at a new school, and taking on more debt to finish their studies.”

Durbin continued, “You have dedicated your life to preparing Illinois students for better opportunities through education. For-profit colleges have proven themselves to be a

direct threat to your life's work. For an Illinois student, getting the right information from the right person, especially at this time of uncertainty, can mean the difference between a successful future and a lifetime of student debt.”

This is the eighth consecutive year that Durbin has written to Illinois educators and school leaders regarding the risks of predatory for-profits. Organizations helping to distribute today's letter include Illinois Principals Association, Illinois Education Association, National Association for College Admission Counseling, Illinois Federation of Teachers, and American Federation of Teachers.

Full text of the letter is available [here](#)