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December 14, 2009

The Honorable George Miller  
Chairman, Committee on Education and Labor  
2181 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Edolphus Towns  
Chairman, Committee on Oversight and Government Reform  
2157 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Miller and Towns:

I write to draw your attention to an investigation conducted by the not-for-profit journalism outlet, ProPublica, on improper enrollment practices at the University of Phoenix (*"At University of Phoenix, Allegations of Enrollment Abuses Persist"*, November 3, 2009; *"University of Phoenix Responds to ProPublica/Marketplace Investigation"*, November 5, 2009; and *"University of Phoenix's Curious Take on the Law"*, November 11, 2009).

As reported, the University of Phoenix has set aside \$80 million to settle a whistleblower lawsuit alleging improprieties by recruiters and recruiting managers to draw students to the for-profit institution.

It was alleged that University of Phoenix admissions representatives lied to prospective students on multiple issues – including the potential for student financial aid, the transferability of credits earned at University of Phoenix, and course availability – as well as failing to acknowledge that students' stated interests were not offered as courses of study.

The pattern of behavior reported is disheartening at best, and infuriating at worst. Vocational schools, community colleges, and other trade programs offer educational opportunities for traditional and non-traditional students alike. Whether because of

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financial difficulties, family obligations, or other reasons, many students would otherwise forego higher education if not for these alternative sources.

However, at a time when our economy has afforded no luxuries to America's working classes, to find that for-profit institutions drew students in with disingenuous claims and sometimes outright fabrication, subjected them to onerous loans, and left them often unusable "credits", is inexcusable.

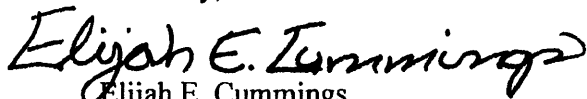
Further, *Huffington Post* reported today that newly released data by the U.S. Department of Education shows that more than 20 percent of student loan borrowers who attend for-profit schools default within three years of beginning repayment.

Accordingly, I urge you to review the attached articles and consider conducting hearings either individually or jointly to shine a light on the for-profit education industry and provide the American people with a clear picture of the true costs of education.

I thank you for your repeated actions to protect American workers, consumers, and students and look forward to working with you on this issue.

Please do not hesitate to contact me or my Legislative Assistant, Ms. Blair Hedgepeth, at [REDACTED] with any questions.

Sincerely,

  
Elijah E. Cummings  
Member of Congress

Enclosures

Cc: The Honorable Darrell Issa  
The Honorable John Kline