



March 22, 2021

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chairwoman
Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee
428 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Burr
Ranking Member
Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee
154 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairwoman Murray and Ranking Member Burr:

AccessLex Institute is pleased to offer its support for S. 839, the *College Transparency Act*, which would overturn the existing student-level data ban and expand access to critical higher education data for all relevant stakeholders, including prospective students, institutions and the public.

AccessLex Institute, in partnership with its nearly 200 nonprofit and state-affiliated ABA-approved member law schools, has been committed to improving access to legal education and to maximizing the affordability and value of a law degree since 1983. The AccessLex Center for Legal Education Excellence advocates for policies that make legal education work better for students and society alike and conducts research on the most critical issues facing legal education today.

As you know, Congress banned the creation of a student-level data system in 2008. Currently, universities only report institution-level data, which fails to adequately capture and evaluate outcomes for students in any targeted way. This results in fragmented data for large subsets of students, including graduate and professional students. Introduced on March 18, 2021 by Senators Bill Cassidy (R-LA), Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), Tim Scott (R-SC), and Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI), the *College Transparency Act* would provide disaggregated data that would help students and families make better informed decisions about higher education.

AccessLex Institute recognizes the concerns related to privacy and security that accompany any data sharing initiative, but notes that the bill includes several measures to protect students against privacy violations. The bill includes a ban on the sale of student data, prohibits access by law enforcement, and limits personally identifiable information. It also bars a federal college ranking or ratings system. AccessLex Institute supports the creation of a student-level data system because it provides relevant stakeholders with information to make crucial decisions.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at cchapman@accesslex.org or Nancy Conneely, Director of Policy, at nconneely@accesslex.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris P. Chapman".

Christopher P. Chapman
President and Chief Executive Officer