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May 27, 2026

The Honorable Linda E. McMahon
Secretary of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20202

Dear Secretary McMahon:

This letter is regarding the delays experienced by applicants to the Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) Buyback. As a strong supporter of PSLF and our public servants, I am concerned by reports I have heard from my constituents of applications sitting without a decision for over a year.

The PSLF program provides essential support to eligible public servants by forgiving the remaining balance of their Direct Loan program student loans, so long as they meet the program requirements. PSLF Buyback provides opportunities for borrowers to “buy back” deferred or forbore monthly payments, allowing borrowers to make previously ineligible periods of deferment or forbearance qualifying monthly payments under PSLF.

This program helps us retain qualified and competent public servants throughout our government and in the nonprofit sector by rewarding workers for their years of service. However, as of April 30, 2026, 88,000 PSLF Buyback applications were pending.¹ In that same month, 4,790 applications were received and 6,870 applications were determined. While it is good that your department is making progress towards the backlog, there is still a long list of public servants waiting for the financial security they were promised.

I was pleased by the recent announcement that the Department of Education’s Office of Federal Student Aid is looking to hire 334 full-time employees by next year, a 45% increase from staffing levels as of April 2026 and increasing total staffing to 1,065 full-time employees.²

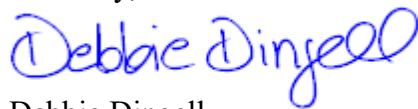
¹ American Federation of Teachers v. U.S. Department of Education, Status Report Document #63. April 15, 2026. Retrieved from: <https://www.courtlistener.com/docket/69753739/63/american-federation-of-teachers-v-us-department-of-education/>.

² Carballo, R. “Education Department Launches Hiring Spree in Key Office, Roughly a Year After Mass Layoffs.” Politico. Retrieved from: https://www.politico.com/news/2026/05/08/education-department-launches-hiring-spree-in-key-office-after-2025s-mass-layoffs-00912445?ICID=ref_fark&utm_campaign=fark&utm_content=link&utm_medium=website&utm_source=fark.

However, even with successfully completing this hiring goal, the Office of Federal Student Aid would still be well under the staffing levels of the previous administration when staffing was as high as 1,444 full-time employees.³ I remain concerned by this administration's propensity to push public servants out of federal work, including through the March 2025 Reduction in Force (RIF) only to have to hire workers for those same positions later on who are then faced with significant backlogs. The Office of Federal Student Aid is no exception.

I am hopeful we can work together to ensure that our public servants long-awaited answers to their applications for PSLF. Thank you for your consideration in this matter and I look forward to receiving a response.

Sincerely,



Debbie Dingell
Member of Congress

³ Hogue, H. "The Office of Federal Student Aid as a Performance-Based Organization." Retrieved from: https://crs.gov/Reports/R46143?source=search&index=0&searchGUID=f0a560d85b8b4b1fa17d378ad470cc90#_To_c215839920.