
Council of Recognized Accrediting Commissions

July 28, 2026

The Honorable Bill Cassidy
Chair, Committee on Health, Education,
Labor and Pensions
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Bernie Sanders
Ranking Member, Committee on Health,
Education, Labor and Pensions
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chair Cassidy and Ranking Member Sanders:

The [Council of Recognized Accrediting Commissions](#) (C-RAC), which represents six federally recognized institutional accrediting commissions that are responsible for accrediting over 2,600 postsecondary, degree-granting colleges and universities across the United States, writes to express support for passage of S. 2511, the [College Transparency Act](#) (CTA), being considered in the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee this week.

This legislation aligns with accreditors seeking more timely and accurate reporting of data, and this legislation would significantly advance the availability of timely and accurate reporting on critical student outcomes while protecting the privacy of students. This information, such as enrollment, completion and post-college earnings across colleges and majors, is not only beneficial to students and institutions but can play a significant role in the work of accreditors in holding institutions and programs accountable and driving continuous improvement.

While C-RAC supports CTA moving forward this week, the legislation should be amended to further strengthen the utility and availability of data for accreditors recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education. We have attached proposed language below which would enable such agencies to receive data and submit queries on institutional and programmatic outcomes in the same manner as allowed for by institutions and States.

Accreditors have relied upon data directly from institutions as well as from Federal datasets, including the Integrated Postsecondary Data System (IPEDS) and the College Scorecard which reflects data from sources including the National Student Loan Data System (NSLDS), IRS earnings data, and U.S. Department of Education (ED) administrative records. Although significant, these data are incomplete. In 2022, C-RAC embarked on a project with ED to collaborate on the data used by accreditors and data provided by the government to identify gaps and challenges with respect to the information accreditors need in order to do their work effectively.

Building upon that effort, earlier this year, C-RAC hosted a [National Data Summit](#) of higher education thought leaders and policy experts to explore opportunities to improve existing data frameworks to better promote transparency and outcomes-oriented accountability in higher education. As a follow up to the summit, C-RAC just released a new environmental scan of the higher education data landscape, "[Accountability with Integrity: A National Framework for Data-Informed Education Accountability](#)."

The same challenges with data persist. The common theme across these efforts has been that our nation's post-secondary system needs a more complete, timely and accurate data system that informs understanding of student outcomes. CTA would help address these challenges

while reducing duplicative reporting burden and improving overall transparency for students, families, policymakers, employers and the general public.

Again, thank you for your work on CTA. As you move forward with this legislation, we would be happy to discuss our recommendation as well as the many aspects of the bill which we support. Please contact the Chair of C-RAC, Dr. Mac Powell, by phone at [REDACTED] or by email at [REDACTED] if we can provide additional information or lend our expertise.

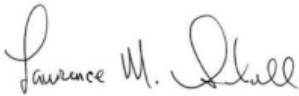
Sincerely,



Dr. Mac Powell
C-RAC Chair
President, Accrediting Commission for
Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC)



Dr. Heather F. Perfetti, President
Middle States Commission on Higher
Education (MSCHE)



Dr. Lawrence M. Schall
C-RAC Vice Chair
President, New England Commission of
Higher Education (NECHE)



Dr. Stephen Pruitt, President
Southern Association of Colleges and
Schools Commission on Colleges
(SACSCOC)



Dr. Barbara Gellman-Danley, President
Higher Learning Commission (HLC)



Dr. Maria Toyoda, President
WASC Senior College and University
Commission (WSCUC)

ATTACHMENT:

Proposed Amendment to S. 2551:

Amend Section 132(l)(5)(A) as follows:

“(5) PERMISSIBLE DISCLOSURES OF DATA.—

“(A) DATA REPORTS AND QUERIES.—

...

“(ii) PROVIDING DATA REPORTS AND QUERIES TO INSTITUTIONS AND STATES.—

“(I) IN GENERAL.—The Commissioner shall provide feedback reports, at least annually, to each institution of higher education, each postsecondary education system that fully participates in the postsecondary student data system, ~~and~~ each State higher education body as designated by the governor, and each accrediting agency recognized by the Secretary.

(II) FEEDBACK REPORTS.—The feedback reports provided under this clause shall include program-level and institution-level information from the postsecondary student data system regarding students who are associated with the institution or, for State representatives, the institutions within that State, or, for each accrediting agency recognized by the Secretary, the program-level and institutional level data of such programs or institutions accredited by such agency, on or before the date of the report, on measures including student mobility and workforce outcomes, provided that the feedback aggregate summary reports protect the privacy of individuals.

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