



**CICERO
ACTION**

Testimony In Support of SB 78

Chairwoman Erickson and members of the Senate Committee on Education.

My name is Michael Brickman and I'm the Education Policy Director and Senior Fellow for Cicero Action, a nonprofit that advocates for entrepreneurial solutions to public policy problems across the country.

Colleges must be accredited in order for their students to access Pell Grants, student loans, and other aid. Prior to regulations enacted in 2019 by Secretary Betsy DeVos, states had little choice in who accredited their institutions. This limited competition and meaningful accountability on both accreditors and institutions while creating a "too big to fail" problem for the largest accreditors.

As a result of these changes, there are several new accrediting agencies considering Department of Education recognition. This provides states with unprecedented choice. While not all state colleges and universities will choose to switch accreditors, many state laws explicitly prohibit it.

Cicero's Accreditation Freedom Policy

- Removes explicit mention of any institutional or programmatic college accreditor in state statute or regulation.
- Explicitly allows state institutions to select their own accreditor from any of those recognized by the U.S. Department of Education.
- Requires a review of each institution's current accreditation choices.
- Some states may choose to follow Florida and North Carolina in affirmatively choosing to switch accreditors.

These changes will

- ✓ Ensure state colleges and universities are overseen by accreditors focused on quality rather than those pushing political agenda or interfering with decisions by state policymakers.
- ✓ Ensure the freedom of the state's colleges and universities to choose an accreditor aligned with its mission.
- ✓ Support the growing nationwide movement to promote innovation in higher education accountability

Thank you all for your time. I am happy to answer any questions you might have.