

# One Wisconsin Now: Student debt duo Scott Walker and Betsy DeVos team up to roll back protections from predatory for profit colleges

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### Cuts to State Oversight and Rollback of Federal 'Borrowers Defense' Rule Leaves Students Vulnerable to Abuse

MADISON, Wis. — Wisconsin consumers are more vulnerable than ever to getting ripped off by predatory for-profit colleges in the aftermath of the recent actions of Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker and Donald Trump's Secretary of Education, Betsy DeVos.

"Scott Walker and Betsy DeVos have teamed up to leave Wisconsin students and consumers more vulnerable than ever to abuses by the predatory for-profit college industry," commented One Wisconsin Now Program Director Analiese Eicher. "These outfits have an appalling track record of preying on hard working students who are just trying to get ahead. But Walker and DeVos think they deserve less scrutiny and consumers deserve less protection."

Walker first proposed the eliminating the Educational Approval Board (EAB), repealing several regulatory provisions and dispersing the agency's remaining duties between other agencies in 2015. His initial effort to eliminate the EAB,

created in 1944 to oversee institutions like for profit colleges and protect consumers, was unsuccessful.

However, two years later, as part of his 2017 budget, Walker succeeded in eliminating the EAB. Functions of the formerly independent agency were transferred to the Department of Safety and Professional Services (DSPS) and experienced staff, including the Executive Director position, were either eliminated or not retained and were instead replaced by staff with no experience with the industry.

Following Walker's actions to scale back oversight in Wisconsin is DeVos' gutting of rules intended to help students saddled with debt by for-profit colleges. Donald Trump's Education Secretary last week proposed repealing the "Borrowers Defense" rule that is intended to help students defrauded by for profit colleges. Instead, under DeVos' proposal, bad colleges would see their liability for ripping off students reduced and the number of students eligible for loan relief would be slashed.

Scrutiny of the for-profit college industry has increased recently, and what has been uncovered is unsavory. Federal government attention has uncovered how the industry targets veterans, minorities and low income students, encourages them to take on large student debts and oftentimes leaves those who graduate with essentially worthless degrees.

In Wisconsin there have been several high profile closures of for-profit college chains including ITT Tech and Globe University. Such closures have left hundreds of state students in limbo, without a way to continue their education or get credit at other institutions for classes they had already completed and paid for.