

WILL: Trump Administration officially rescinds Obama-era school discipline policy

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Trump Administration Officially Rescinds Obama-era School Discipline Policy

WILL has helped lead the charge to roll back the illegal, harmful Obama policy

Today, U.S. Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos officially [rescinded](#) a 2014 Obama-era “Dear Colleague” letter that was used to influence school suspension policies by threatening federal action if discipline policies resulted in a “disparate impact” on racial minorities.

WILL President and General Counsel Rick Esenberg applauded the move:

“The Obama-era “Dear Colleague” letter was bad law and policy. It was an illegal exercise of administrative power by the Obama Administration which sought to have greater control over local school districts’ discipline policies. But academic achievement in Wisconsin schools suffered as a result. The Trump Administration recognized that school leaders and local officials deserve the authority and trust to create and implement discipline policies without worrying about federal bureaucrats meddling in their classroom.

Legal protections still exist. Rescinding this unlawful “Dear Colleague” letter leaves in place the rigorous anti-discrimination provisions of Title IV and VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.”

Last summer, WILL spearheaded a [letter](#) from conservative leaders to Secretary DeVos, warning her that she must rescind Obama’s 2014 “Dear Colleague” letter. WILL has been at the forefront of this debate, including publishing the following:

- [Feds in the Classroom: The Impact of the Obama Administration’s Discipline Policy on Wisconsin’s Public Schools](#) revealed federal actions meant to encourage changes to discipline policies led to a 41% decrease in suspension rates in Wisconsin public schools.
- [Collateral Damage: The Impact of Department of Education Policies on Wisconsin Schools](#) used seven years of data from 2,000 Wisconsin schools and found mathematics and reading proficiency was lower in schools that implemented the softer discipline policies encouraged by the Obama administration.
- [“New York Times tries and fails to paint Trump administration as racist”](#), Rick Esenberg, Washington Examiner, December 19, 2018
- [“The negative effects of Obama’s ‘positive’ school discipline policies”](#), Will Flanders and Natalie Goodnow, New York Daily News, March 16, 2018
- [“Obama school discipline policies hurt Wisconsin kids”](#), Will Flanders and Natalie Goodnow, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, November 27, 2017