



THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION
WASHINGTON, DC 20202

December 15, 2025

The Honorable Tim Walz
Governor of Minnesota
130 State Capitol
75 Rev Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Governor Walz,

The integrity of America's federalist system—where governance is a partnership between national and state authorities—only works if state leaders uphold justice and common sense.

When states abuse their authority to oversee free and fair elections, enforce criminal law, or distribute entitlements and other public benefits, that system of states' rights and liberties, that relationship of trust, falls apart.

You have been Minnesota's Governor since 2019. During that time, your careless lack of oversight and abuse of the welfare system has attracted fraudsters from around the world, especially from Somalia, to establish a beachhead of criminality in our country. As President Trump put it, you have turned Minnesota into a "fraudulent hub of money laundering activity."

At the beginning of this year, the U.S. Department of Education became aware that fraudulent college applicants, especially concentrated in Minnesota, were gaming the federal postsecondary education system to collect money that was intended for young Americans to help them afford college.

We call these fraudsters "ghost students" because they were not ID-verified and often did not live in the United States, or they simply did not exist. In Minnesota, 1,834 ghost students were found to have received \$12.5 million in taxpayer-funded grants and loans. They collected checks from the federal government, shared a small portion of the money with the college, and pocketed the rest—without attending the college at all.

To stop ghost students, we at the Department of Education implemented enhanced fraud controls such as mandatory identity verification for certain first-time student applicants. Our new fraud prevention system has now blocked more than \$1 billion in attempted financial aid theft by fraudsters, including coordinated international fraud rings and AI bots pretending to be students.

Even one of your state's top elected officials, Congresswoman Ilhan Omar, has sought to take advantage of the federal taxpayer by advocating for broad student debt cancellation — which she has publicly acknowledged will benefit her directly. She borrowed tens of thousands of dollars to attend college as a politics major that she now does not think she should have to repay, despite her generous, taxpayer-funded salary.


My colleagues in other federal departments have uncovered the massive scandal of welfare fraud in Minnesota, where you have done absolutely nothing as governor to stop this criminal behavior. Scammers have gotten rich off federal housing, education, food stamp, and small business programs—even defrauding assistance for elder care and autistic children.

Joining these criminals in their schemes have been Minnesota politicians who benefit—both in votes and donations—from the fraudsters' support. Like the radical Islamic terror groups overseas who receive Minnesota money to kill American servicemembers, Minnesota's political elite has turned a blind eye and even helped facilitate the laundering of money that was meant to help America's least fortunate.

Shame on you, Governor Walz, for allowing this to happen—and for benefiting from it. Stop defrauding American taxpayers. No politician is above the law, and my department, alongside every other agency under the leadership of President Trump, will continue to ensure that you will not be able to dodge accountability for your actions.

Given your dereliction of the office entrusted to you by Minnesotans, I implore you to resign and make way for more capable leadership.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Linda McMahon", with a long, sweeping horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Linda E. McMahon

U.S. Secretary of Education