



## **Don't block the education secretary, end the Department of Education**

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Newly sworn-in Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos tried, and eventually succeeded, to visit a Washington, D.C., public school Friday morning. As warned by her opponents after she was confirmed by a razor-thin margin on Tuesday, she was met by protesters who intended to make good on the threat to block her at every turn. In this case, literally: according to videos like the one below, they physically tried to prevent her from entering the building.

The opposition to DeVos, as I've suggested over the last several weeks, has been over the top and, frankly, unfair. It also hasn't done much to improve the sick state of the national political dialogue.

That said, there may be no one more sympathetic to objections to federal education meddling than me. Indeed, if the school refused to let DeVos visit because it did not want the disruption or political theater, I'd have been all for it.

But there is a way more constructive way to solve the problem of dangerous or unwanted federal intervention than blocking schoolhouse doors: work to end the federal Department of Education.

This does not, by the way, mean ending the federal role in keeping states and districts from discriminating in their provision of education, but that is much more properly a Justice Department responsibility.

The vast majority of what the Education Department does is collect taxpayer money, burn a bunch off in bureaucracy, then bundle the remainder into programs that tell states, districts and schools how to run education, all with little evidence of meaningful academic effects. This

situation will likely improve a bit with the Every Student Succeeds Act, which does return some control to states, but a little better is still awfully bad.

The good news is that a window has opened for the protestors and anyone else worried about federal power — or maybe just interested in seeing the Constitution obeyed — to end the education department.

Rep. Thomas Massie, R-Ky., has just introduced legislation to end the Education Department. The text of the bill is simple: "The Department of Education shall terminate on December 31, 2018." That's it. I'd like to see what would happen to all the programs the department runs — they're the meat of the problem — but the simple bill is a major step in the right direction.