

Neal McCluskey on Senator Harkin's Crusade

By George Leef

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Iowa Democrat Tom Harkin has been gunning to get the for-profit higher-ed sector for several years and yesterday his committee released a report that attacks it relentlessly.

There is a lot of quick-buck artistry in the sector. Unscrupulous firms dragoon in students and collect money from them (mostly funds that come through government programs), go through the educational motions, and in the end leave many of those “students” worse off than before. But the root of the problem is not that the schools are for-profit, but that when you have lots of money going through the fingers of third-party payers, you’ll almost inevitably get a lot of scams. Many “non-profit” colleges and universities behave in much the same way (I use the snicker quotes because, as Vance Fried correctly observes, non-profit schools earn profits, but spend them on an array of needless frills), but Harkin is only interested in attacking the explicitly for-profit schools.

Neal McCluskey of the Cato Institute has an excellent comment on Harkin's nasty little project [here](#).