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The [National Black Chamber of Commerce](#) has spoken out against a Department of Education rule that officials say will discriminate against low-income students.

The goal of the gainful employment rule is [reportedly](#) to protect students of for-profit colleges from getting into unsustainable debt.

“While career colleges play a vital role in training our workforce to be globally competitive, some of them are saddling students with debt they cannot afford in exchange for degrees and certificates they cannot use,” Secretary Education Arne Duncan said in a [statement](#). “These schools- and their investors- benefit from billions of dollars in subsidies from taxpayers, and in return, taxpayers have a right to know that these programs are providing solid preparation for a job. The rules we’ve proposed today will help ensure that career college and training programs use federal student aid to prepare students for success.”

The proposed rules would set minimum standards on the percentage of students repaying federal loans and the amount of debt they have compared to their earnings, the Star-Telegram noted.

But the National Black Chamber of Commerce said the rule will disproportionately harm low-income and minority populations, according to a [statement](#).

“Gainful Employment will disproportionately harm low-income and minority populations by discriminating against students who must borrow the needed tuition to attend college,” said NBCC President Harry Alford. “Without financial aid, access to higher education will be limited for thousands of students.

“At present, Black students make up 18% of enrollees in for-profit colleges and universities – many of them would find it impossible to pursue higher education without this financial aid. Many of these private sector schools are the solution to our education challenges, not the problem.”

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A Chicago native, Bridgette has been a journalist since she first wrote for her seventh grade newsletter. Today, that passion is just as strong. She has written for several newspapers, including the Houston Chronicle, the Houston Defender, the Marshall News-Messenger (Texas) and the Springfield News-Sun (Ohio).