



April 26, 2017

The Honorable Betsy DeVos
U.S. Secretary of Education
400 Maryland Ave, SW
Washington, DC 20202

Dear Secretary DeVos:

On behalf of the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA), I write to extend our gratitude and appreciation for the verification relief the Department of Education has provided students in response to the outage of the IRS Data Retrieval Tool (DRT).

As you know, both students and institutions rely heavily upon the DRT to not only complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), but also to streamline and simplify the verification process, which can be cumbersome and burdensome, particularly for the lowest income students. The Department's recent guidance to allow institutions to use a signed copy of 2015 tax returns for verification documentation and to no longer require documentation from the IRS to verify non-filing status will go a long way in helping to ease the burden of verification. This relief will also help to mitigate delays in financial aid awarding occurring as a result of the drawn-out verification process caused by the DRT outage.

With the importance of data security in mind, we remain hopeful that the DRT will be available to students as soon as possible and urge the Department and IRS to continue working on this very important issue. In the interim, we thank you for putting students first in this guidance.

Sincerely,

Justin Draeger,
President, NASFAA

cc:

Mr. James Manning, Senior Advisor to the Under Secretary and Acting Under Secretary
Ms. Lynn Mahaffie, Delegated Duties of Assistant Secretary for Postsecondary Education
Mr. James Runcie, Chief Operating Officer, Office of Federal Student Aid