

#SaveYourVI

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS AT SCHOOL

An Open Letter to Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos in Response to the Announcement that the Department of Education Will "Scale Back" Investigations into Civil Rights Violations in Public Schools:

To Betsy DeVos,

Allow us to introduce ourselves. We are the **#SaveYourVI** campaign and we are comprised of mostly women of color whose children have endured Title VI violations on their school campuses. We exist to educate and advocate for the federally protected right to feel safe at school.

If you're unaware, as we've found many public school employees to be, Title VI is the part of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 that states that, "No person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance."

We read in an article published by the NY Times, June 16, 2017 that you and your newly appointed head of the Office for Civil Rights are planning to "scale back" on investigations of systemic "issues" (discrimination) in schools. We see you. You are attacking a federally protected, human right. You are trying to disable the Office for Civil Rights, to impede the process of protecting our children from racism, discrimination, and hostile campus climates. You are demonizing and blocking the mechanism put in place by the U.S. Department of Education to make sure that victims have a system for recourse if their school or district has failed them, and to make sure the American people's tax money is allocated to programs that provide equitable education for ALL students.

Betsy, you and everyone in the Department of Education are accountable to or in violation of Title VI regulations. If you are not doing an adequate job to reinforce federal law, if your agency walks away from incidents of bullying or harassment that are known to you, then you are complicit in violation of Title VI. But why would you narrow the scope of protections, remove money, or remove hope from students' lives when it isn't necessary? Are you here to help our children or to hurt them?

All students should feel welcome and safe at school.

Very Truly Yours,

The Team at **#SaveYourVI**