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teachers could set an example for their students about the importance of education.

"Make no mistake, this effort, what is being done to de-professionalize education, is intentional," Dias said. "With this administration's efforts, they're attempting to really identify that education is unnecessary."

Dias also said this effort was consistent with what has already come from the Trump administration.

"There's no question that this is a part of a larger scheme to reduce an educated population, to make sure that we can't question authority because we don't know how, to make sure we don't have access to the leadership in classrooms and in schools that would allow our populace to be highly educated and invested in the democracy that we are all trying to build," she said.

Dias noted that the Trump administration was targeting a mainly-female industry and said that was also intentional.

Corey Moses, the first vice president of the Hartford Federation of Teachers, said that forcing students to choose between economic survival and following their dream "defeats the basic tenets of American education."

"This de-professionalization hits at the core that everyone should be able to follow a dream and be economically prosperous. Educators in this vocation took on a vow of charity, not a vow of poverty," Moses said. "If we wish to have future generations believe in the dream of being anything they put their mind to, we must continue to maintain the professional status of those that inspire them."

Dawn Brown is the executive director of Connecticut's National Association of Social Workers chapter. She thanked Blumenthal for his commitment and advocacy and emphasized that social workers are professionals.

"We have the privilege, and let me say this, the responsibility to work with individuals, families and communities throughout our state," Brown said. "With the increasing needs of our Connecticut communities, everything from access to food and affordable shelter to advocacy to quality affordable mental health care, there is always a need for more social workers to support our communities, to go from just surviving to ultimately thriving."

She also said these loan changes would lead to less women and people of color in professional roles and force people to reach for riskier private student loans.

"In order to maintain a workforce that is representative of the communities we serve, it is imperative to ensure access, availability and affordable loan options are available to support our graduate students in social work and education and other professions that would be impacted," Brown said.

Brown said the bill could have a detrimental impact on the Connecticut workforce and beyond.

"Let's make it very clear: we are living in a time where we need more professionals in social work and education, not less," she said.

Joslyn DeLancey, the vice president of the Connecticut Education Association, said that teachers were "more than professionals" with their passion and commitment to their practice.

"Removing our professional titles and denying us access to education does not just harm our professions and our colleagues and our future colleagues," DeLancey said. "It harms every community in our state and our nation, because our educator conditions and expectations are our students' learning conditions."

She said they should demand better for their students.

"Your children deserve to have highly educated, skilled individuals serving you and your classrooms," DeLancey said.

Blumenthal ended the press conference by thanking the participants and restating that the bill's measures were "cruel and stupid."

"We're going to continue this fight," he said. "We're not giving up."



Sen. Richard Blumenthal speaks at a press conference to address federal student loan limits imposed on teaching and social work degrees. The press conference was held in Hartford, Conn. on Feb. 9, 2026.

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