

Charles A. Chadwick Jr.

Date: July 26, 2025

Linda E. McMahon

Secretary of Education
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20202

Subject: Request to Share My Story – Plumbing Helped Me Pay for and Repay My Student Loans

Dear Secretary McMahon,

I hope this message finds you well. My name is Charles Chadwick Jr., and I'm writing to respectfully request the opportunity to share my personal story through the Department of Education's platforms. My experience—using the trade skill of plumbing to help pay my way through college and later repay my student loans—offers a positive and practical example for families across America who are weighing the costs of college and the value of the trades.

Back in 2021, I reached out to the Department and to the NAACP, hoping someone would help me get my story heard. Unfortunately, I never received a response. It's frustrating when everyday voices like mine are overlooked simply because we don't have thousands of dollars to spend on media exposure. At times, it makes me feel like President Trump may have been right when he called out the news as being out of touch and FAKE. I have written the Washington Post, New York Times, News Max, NPR, USA Today, Senator Kennedy and other agencies. I was offered a priceless of what I could pay to have my story published! I feel cheated in the American system of the press. I don't want fame or politics—I just want my story to inspire others.

I was born and raised in Jacksonville North Carolina, where I learned the value of hard work and opportunity. My father was a plumber. He refused to co-sign any student loans for me, reminding me that he had already given me a gift: the skill of plumbing. He told me that if I wanted to go to college, I'd have to find a way to pay for it myself.

So, I did. I enrolled in college, took out student loans where needed, and relied on plumbing jobs to help cover tuition, books, and living expenses. After graduation, I used that same trade skill—plumbing—to pay back every single loan with interest. I now hold two college degrees, but the most valuable thing I carried with me was the trade I learned at home. I'm now a contractor living in Hawaii and working in construction security for government buildings for the military.

Today, there is a growing national debate about college versus trades. I believe I'm living proof that it doesn't have to be one or the other—you can do both. And more importantly, both can work together to create a path to financial independence.

I also want to uplift the roots I came from. Secretary McMahon I never knew you was from New Bern, NC, and it reminds me that people from small towns with big determination can make a difference. That's why I want to be part of the Department's mission to bring more positivity to the conversation around student loans and career choices. I want to be a voice that shows students and families that there is more than one path—and that sometimes, the best opportunities come from combining college with a skilled trade.

I would be honored to share my story, whether through a press feature, a blog, a public event, or an educational outreach campaign. Thank you for taking the time to read this letter, and I truly hope someone from your team will reach out.

With gratitude,

Charles A. Chadwick Jr.

Author, Speaker, and Student Loan Advocate
www.ChadwicksExperiences.com



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

September 30, 2025

Mr. Charles A. Chadwick Jr.
583 Kamoku Street, Unit 2003
Honolulu, HI 96816

Dear Mr. Chadwick:

Thank you for your letter to the Secretary of Education and for sending her a copy of your book and other materials which we are pleased to accept on behalf of the U.S. Department of Education.

While we appreciated hearing your story, federal ethics laws prohibit the Secretary and other federal employees from endorsing, promoting, or distributing books and other educational materials. I hope that you will understand.

Thank you again for writing. Please accept our best wishes.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Tracey St. Pierre".

Tracey St. Pierre
Director, Executive Secretariat