Education Secretary ducks safe school re-opening issue, instead touts plan to make it harder for college students to report sexual harassment and assault through changes to Title IX.

WISCONSIN -- As Betsy DeVos held a closed door event with the Wisconsin Federalist Society on Tuesday, WEAC President Ron Martin, La Crosse Teachers Jesse Martinez and Tammy Gruen, and Wisconsin College Democrats Chair Cecelia McDermott called out herand Donald Trump's inability to lead during this crisis and callous attitude toward the public education system.

As local school districts and teachers are left in the dark about a plan to keep families safe, DeVos is instead focused on touting her proposal that will make it harder for college students to report sexual harassment and assault through changes to Title IX. These educators and students make it clear that Trump and DeVos have no solutions to the issues facing our

schools and universities, and that it is vital to elect Joe Biden and the Democrats this fall.

***Watch the full event here* or read excerpts of what the speakers said below.**

WEAC President Ron Martin: "I started teaching for the same reason most teachers do -- we want to help children grow, succeed, and have a positive impact. Now, I represent educators all across Wisconsin who have also dedicated their lives to students. And what I'm hearing across the board is that teachers are frankly fed-up with Betsy DeVos and Donald Trump's complete disregard for educators, children, and their families. DeVos and Trump are absolutely tone deaf to what's on the mind of families and teachers…When COVID first forced our schools to close, we were devastated to end the school year without seeing our students in person, but we knew that closing buildings was the right thing to do. Now as we look to another school year, parents and educators are still anxious and uncertain, the result of the complete lack of leadership from DeVos and Trump. It's clear there's no plan…We all deserve better than that. We deserve more testing, a national tracing plan, proper PPE, and the funding to make it all happen, so we can go back to our schools, face to face, safely…We agree with teacher Jill Biden, and her husband Joe, that schools need a clear science-based strategy."

Jesse Martinez: "It's been very clear from the outset that Betsy DeVos and Donald Trump just don't care about investing in our public schools, and they don't care about keeping our students, our families, and our teachers safe. Right now, that mindset is more dangerous than ever. Students and teachers are the future of this country and they deserve leaders who are willing to invest in their success. Trump and DeVos have made it clear that education is not a priority to them. They have continually punted the ball down the field on this issue, and now they are demanding that schools reopen their doors without proper funding or support. It's time to think long and hard about what type of leadership we want for our students and for our communities. That's why it is so vital to elect new leadership this fall. Joe Biden and his team have committed to putting a teacher in charge of the Department of Education and investing in our public schools. That is the type of leadership that our students, our families, and our communities deserve."

Tammy Gruen: "For us to do the best jobs and students to have the best chance at learning, we need to all feel like we're in a safe environment… but my student's have been robbed of this by Donald Trump and Betsy DeVos. Instead of figuring out ways to slow the spread and put a plan in place to get me and my students back into the classroom together, they've used their time downplaying the risk and essentially just throwing their hands up, not caring about the health risk this disease poses to myself and my students…I want to be able to sit down with one of my students at their desk and work through a tough problem with them, but that wont happen until COVID-19 is under control. Teachers and students alike deserve better than Trump's politically-motivated re-opening strategy. We must listen to science and experts, and not to the politics."

President of the Wisconsin College Democrats Cecelia McDermott: "It's appalling not just that Secretary Betsy Devos would make changes to Ttile IX that make it harder to report sexual harassment and assault on college campuses, but now she is taking a victory lap today in an event she's with the Federalist Society holding in Wisconsin…These changes are meant to

silence survivors, not protect them or serve justice…What makes this even worse is Trump and Devos are pursuing this agenda as the COVID-19 pandemic rages instead of figuring out how they're going to send kids back to school safely this fall…It's clear we cannot expect leadership from Trump or Devos, and that they have no interest in making things better -- whether that has to do slowing the spread COVID-19 or mitigtating sexual assault on college campuses."