



Congress of the United States of America
House of Representatives

September 28, 2004

Vernon J. Ehlers

Michigan

Ms. Eleni P. Kalisch
Assistant Director
Federal Bureau of Investigation
935 Pennsylvania Avenue
Room 7240
Washington, D.C. 20535

Dear Ms. Kalisch,

I am writing to request that you assign at least one full-time agent to investigate so-called "diploma mills." If such an agent is already assigned, I ask that you inform me of any ongoing investigations and prosecutions related to diploma mills.

Recently, I was astounded to receive an e-mail offering a "genuine college degree" in two weeks (attached). Since receiving the e-mail, the House Subcommittee on 21st Century Competitiveness held a hearing on diploma mills, and I was outraged to learn that more than one million Americans likely hold these bogus and fraudulent degrees, providing billions in revenue for diploma mill operators each year.

Diploma mills and fraudulent degrees harm students, employers, universities, taxpayers and federal and state governments. As a recipient of a hard-earned Ph.D. in physics and a former college professor, I am very troubled that "graduates" of diploma mills may claim impressive credentials to defraud potential employers, yet did not engage in any study or research. It is very disturbing that some diploma-mill recipients are given top-secret clearances, promotions based on education credentials, and teaching positions at our universities. Even more disturbing is the Government Accountability Office's report *Diploma Mills: Federal Employees Have Obtained Degrees from Diploma Mills and Other Unaccredited Schools, Some at Government Expense* (GAO-04-771T), which found that senior-level federal employees hold fraudulent degrees and the federal government paid diploma mills in excess of \$169,000 in taxpayer funds. (The report is available at <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d04771t.pdf>.)

Diploma mills must be closed so that the integrity of our excellent educational system may be preserved. I understand that the U.S. Postal Service, the Department of Education, the Federal Trade Commission and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) share jurisdiction over investigating diploma mills, with the FBI being responsible for criminal investigations and prosecution. Unfortunately, as retired FBI agent Allen Ezell testified at our hearing on September 23, the FBI terminated DIPSCAM, your diploma mill fraud investigation, in the early



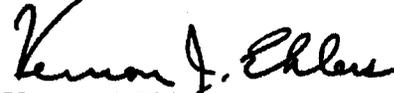
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1990s. I strongly urge you to dedicate at least one agent to educational fraud investigations so that the proliferation of diploma mills, and the bogus degrees they offer, may end.

Thank you for considering my request. I ask you to please provide me with a written response by October 15. If you have any questions, please contact me or Rachel Post of my staff at 202-225-3831.

With best wishes, I am

Sincerely,



Vernon J. Ehlers
Member of Congress

VJE:rp

Cc: Rep. John Boehner, Chairman, Education and Workforce Committee
Rep. Buck McKeon, Chairman, Subcommittee on 21st Century Competitiveness
Rep. Dale Kildee, Ranking Member, Subcommittee on 21st Century Competitiveness

Enclosure

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----- Original Message -----

From: 111234201 <<mailto:111234201@e-ol.de>>

Sent: Saturday, September 18, 2004 11:46 AM

Subject: A Genuine College Degree Within 2 weeks! 100% Verifiable!

A Genuine College Degree in 2 weeks !

Have you ever thought that the only thing stopping you from a great job and better pay was a few letters behind your name? Well now you can get them!

BA BSc MA MSc MBA PhD

Within 2 weeks! No Study Required! 100% Verifiable!

These are real, genuine degrees that include Bachelors, Masters and Doctorate degrees. They are verifiable and student records and transcripts are also available.

This little known secret has been kept quiet for years. The opportunity exists due to a legal loophole allowing some established colleges to award degrees at their discretion.

With all of the attention that this news has been generating, I wouldn't be surprised to see this loophole closed very soon. Order yours today. Just call the number below. You'll thank me later.

206-309-0904