



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE ADMINISTRATORS
AND SUPERVISORS OF PRIVATE SCHOOLS

Student Complaints – Many Options, But Do Students Know Where to Go?

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2024 NASASPS Annual Conference

April 7-10 | Charleston, SC

Presenters



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Agenda



- Complaint Option Overview
- State Oversight Entities & Responsibilities
- Institution Responsibilities
- Discussion - Duty to Inform Students
 - Website Discoveries & Suggestions
 - Panel & Attendee Discussion

Complaint Options Are Confusing to Students

**START
HERE**



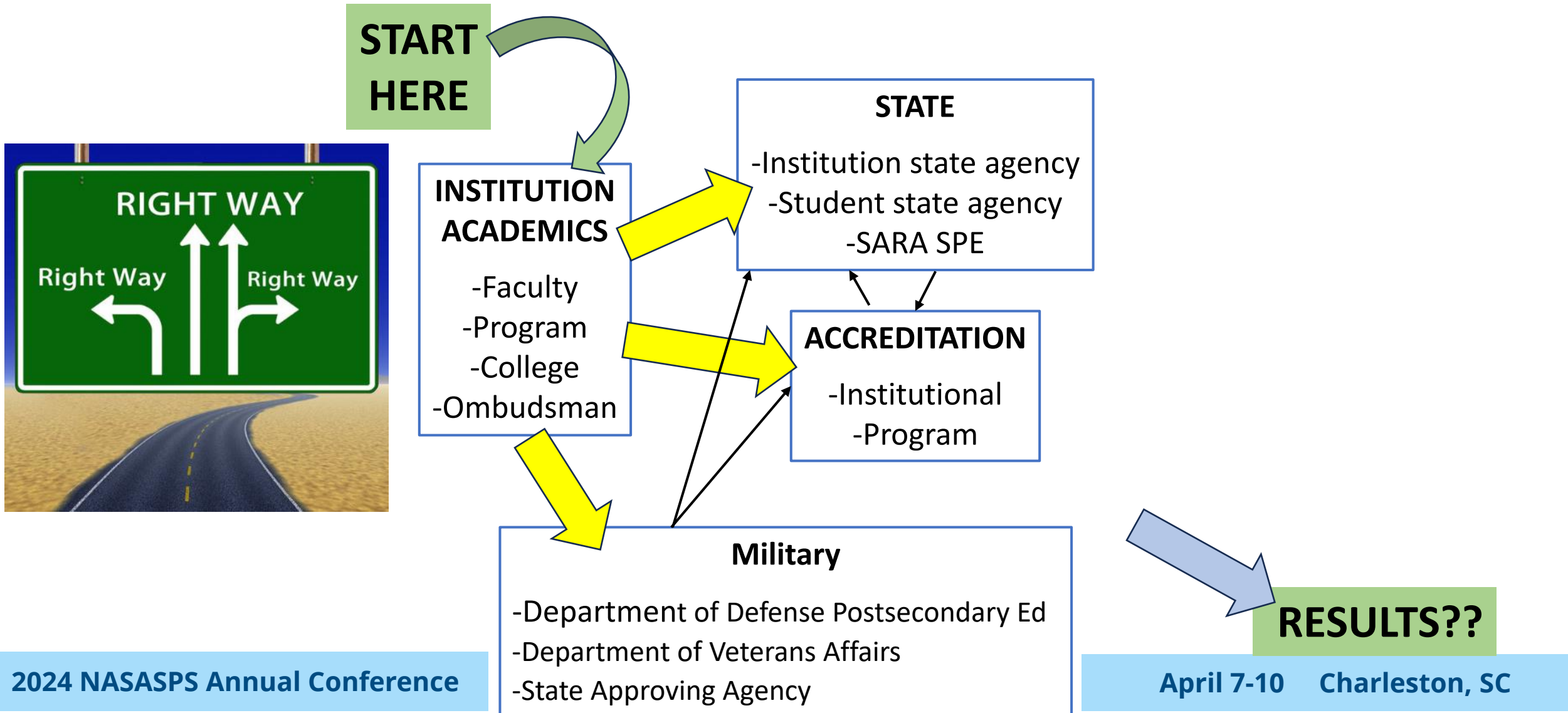
**INSTITUTION
ACADEMICS**

- Faculty
- Program
- College
- Ombudsman

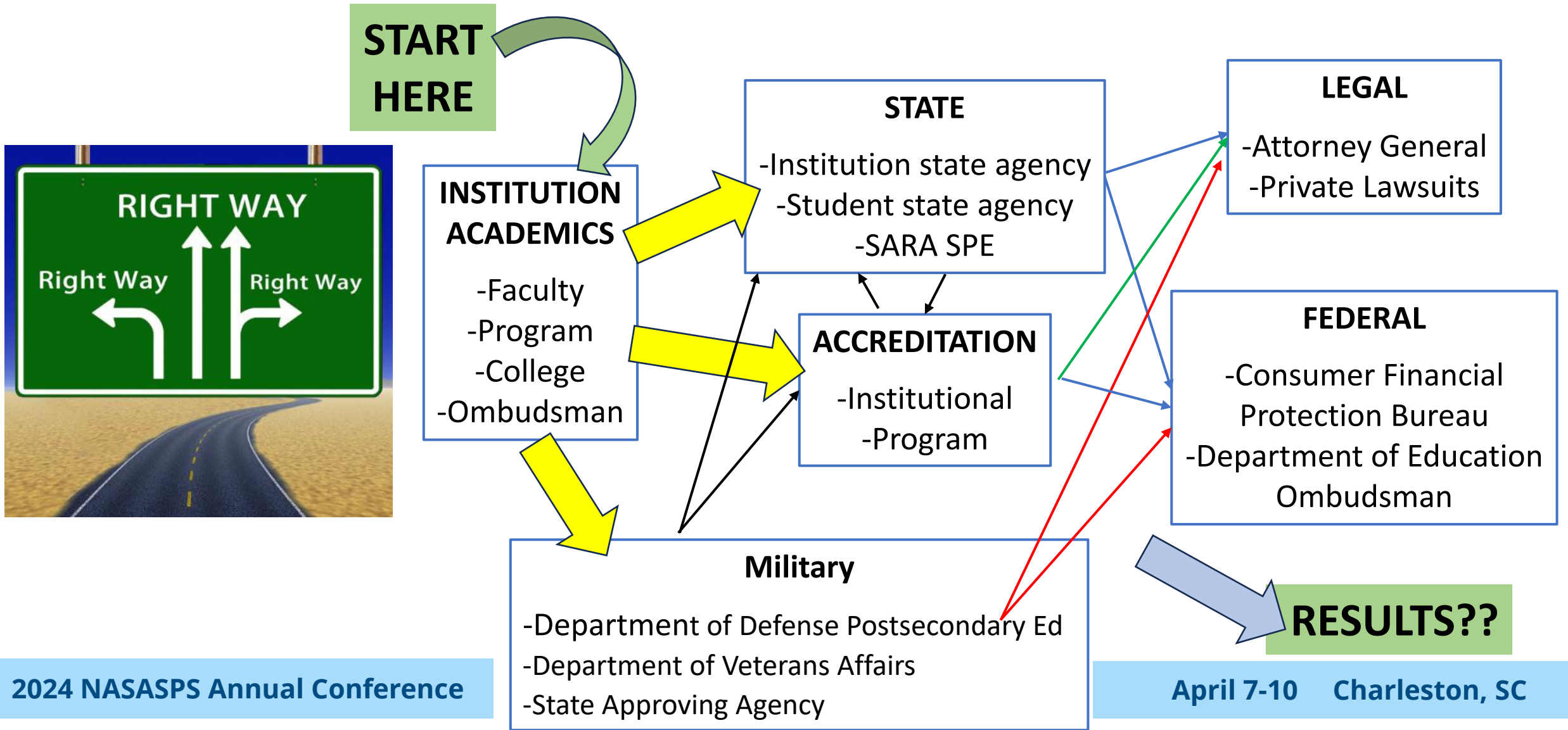


RESULTS??

Complaint Options Are Confusing to Students



Complaint Options Are Confusing to Students



State Oversight Entities & Responsibilities

Different State Agencies:

- Attorney General Office
- State Authorizer / Regulator
- State Department of Education (if separate)
- SARA State Portal Entity (SPE)



State Oversight Entities & Responsibilities



Examples of complaints that may arise:

- Veracity of recruitment and marketing materials;
- Accuracy of job placement data;
- Accuracy of information about tuition, fees and financial aid;
- Complete and accurate admission requirements for courses and programs;
- Accuracy of information about the institution's accreditation and/or any programmatic/specialized accreditation held by the institution's programs;
- Accuracy of information about whether course work meets any relevant Professional Licensing requirements or the requirements of specialized accrediting agencies;
- Accuracy of information about whether the institution's course work will transfer to other institutions.

State Oversight Entities & Responsibilities

Student Complaints and State Responsibilities #1 Student Protections



State Oversight Entities & Responsibilities



SARA Student Complaint Process:

- The state agrees to serve as the default forum for any complaint relating to the institution's operations carried out under SARA provisions filed against an institution authorized by the state to participate in SARA reciprocity, once the complaint has gone through the institution's standard complaint process.
- The SPE is responsible for conducting the investigation and resolution of complaints that are not resolved at the institutional level.
- The SPE may enlist the assistance of other responsible entities in the state in carrying out the work of complaint resolution.
- Complaints about fraud or criminal activity can go to any State Attorney General or the office of the Inspector General or complaint unit of the U.S. Department of Education.

State Oversight Entities & Responsibilities

SARA Student Complaints:

- Between 2015 and 2023 there were 347 SARA student complaints.
- SARA Policy Manual – Section 4.5
 - b. Complaints regarding student grades or student conduct violations are governed entirely by institutional policy and the laws of the SARA institution's home state.

State Oversight Entities & Responsibilities



A More Robust SARA Student Complaint Process?

- Require each participating state to implement a process for communicating information about students' complaints to the organization that administers the reciprocity agreement and to the students' home state.
- Permit member states to – consistent with their own statutes and regulations – accept, investigate, and resolve complaints about an institution that have not been submitted to and received by the institution.
- Require an organization that administers a reciprocity agreement to publish student complaint data for the public at least annually, including but not limited to the number and type of complaints by institution that is subject to the state reciprocity agreement.

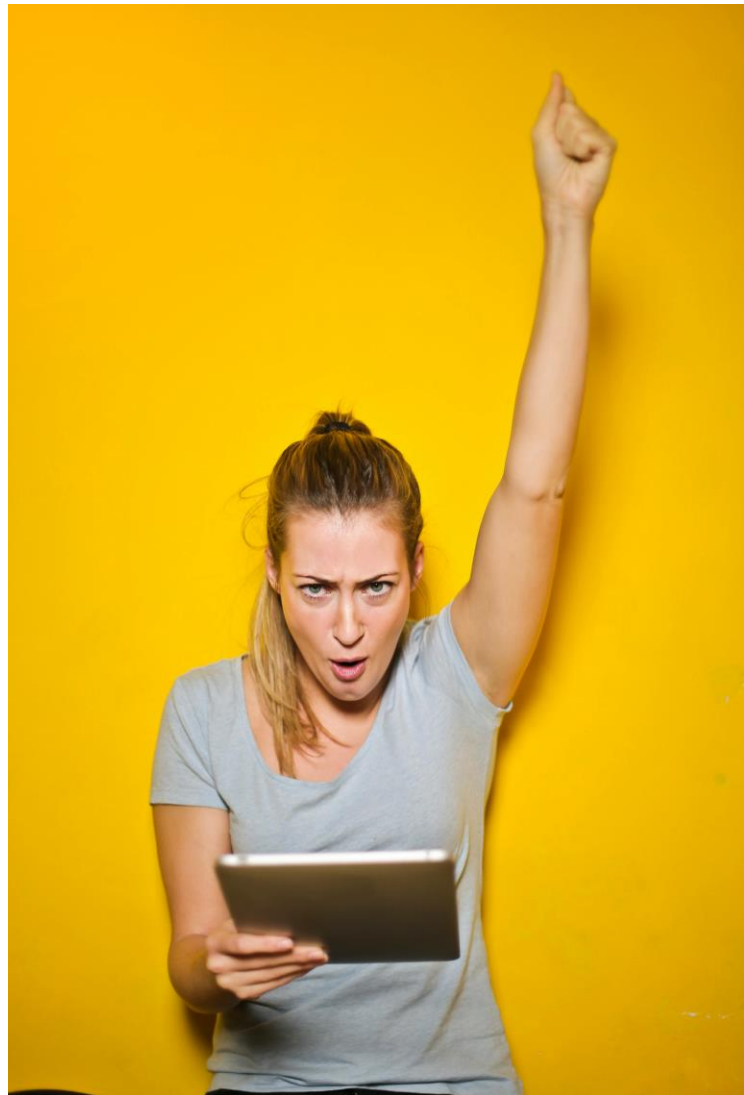
Stay Tuned!

Institution Responsibilities

Per Federal regulation [34 CFR 668.43 \(b\)](#), an institution must make available:

- **Copy of Documents:**
 - Institution's Accreditation
 - Institution's Approval or Licensing – State, Federal or Tribal
- **Contact information** for filing complaints:
 - Accreditor
 - State approval or licensing entity & any other relevant State official or agency
- Enrolled or Prospective Students
- For face-to-face and distance education.





Secret Shopper Findings

[Photos by pexels-andrea-piacquadio](#)



Discussion

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Contact Us!

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National Council for
State Authorization
Reciprocity Agreements

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Questions?

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Thank you!

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