

January 12, 2026

Dear Member of Congress,

We, the undersigned parents, educators, students, education and civil rights organizations, and supporters of public education from every state in the nation, are writing to express our deep concern regarding the Trump administration's decision to illegally dismantle the U.S. Department of Education (ED). By transferring many of ED's programs and responsibilities to other federal agencies that have no history or expertise in education, the Trump administration is creating a fractured, chaotic, and inefficient system for implementing the laws Congress has passed. The federal role in education has always been to support states in expanding educational access and to ensure equal opportunity for all students. Dismantling ED leaves students without the federal backstop established by Congress to ensure they receive a high-quality education and protect their civil rights. It also weakens the implementation and oversight of federal programs and creates confusion, bureaucracy, and uncertainty at the state level. We respectfully urge you to use your authority as a member of Congress to reverse these actions and restore ED to full operation, as required by law.

Congress alone has the authority to dissolve ED. Because ED was established through [statute](#), it is illegal for an executive action to dismantle or redistribute its core functions. Further, appropriations law expressly prohibits the transfer of funds from one department or agency to another.¹ The recent interagency agreements and transfers of authority exceed executive power. The Trump administration's actions are not only harmful; they are unlawful.

Dismantling ED will not reduce bureaucracy; it will create more of it. Instead of one department coordinating and aligning federal education programs, we now have five: Departments of Labor (DOL); Health and Human Services (HHS); Interior; and State, in addition to what will now be an even more gutted education department. States and districts now must navigate multiple federal agencies, each with different systems, contacts, reporting requirements, and priorities, just to access the same dollars that once flowed through a single, knowledgeable source. That does not cut red tape; it ties states, schools, and families into new knots of confusion and delay. It also weakens trust in the information, technical

¹ See Further Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2024, PL 118–47; Sec. 512. This language was retained in the FY 2025 continuing resolution.

assistance, and guidance states and districts receive, raising concerns about whether that information is consistent across agencies and properly reviewed or vetted by career staff with expertise in education statutes, including civil rights requirements, special education, and special populations, among others. And with additional transfers expected, including moving the Office for Civil Rights to the Department of Justice and Office of Special Education Programs to HHS, this fragmentation is likely to grow even worse.

Education deserves to be a national priority, not an afterthought. Yet, that is what happens when vital programs are placed in agencies whose missions have little to do with student learning. DOL, now responsible for the majority of transferred programs, has never been charged with serving children with disabilities, children experiencing homelessness, English learners, youth in foster care, or other populations who rely on federal law to actualize their right to an equal education. Agencies like DOL, HHS, and Interior do important work, but they were not built to support schools. Expecting them to suddenly oversee federal education programs splintered across multiple agencies places students, and taxpayer dollars, at real risk.

The Trump administration has argued that this restructuring will “return education to the states.” Education is, always has been, and should always remain, a state and local responsibility, with appropriate support and requirements from the federal level as needed. Dismantling ED does not “return” education to the states. Instead, it forces states to work through more federal agencies, not fewer, making it harder to access funds, receive reliable guidance and technical assistance, and comply with the laws that Congress put in place. Further, it will stifle innovation and disrupt planning, as states consider holding back funds to cover any shortfalls that could rise as a result of federal instability. This is not limited government; it is fragmented and chaotic government costing states time and resources that could be better spent meeting the needs of students.

Congress created ED for a reason: to provide steady, focused leadership and ensure that expertise exists at the federal level to help states and districts support student success. For decades, ED has played that role. It does not control schools. Rather, it oversees the use of taxpayer dollars, provides resources to states, and protects students’ rights. In doing so, it helps ensure all students, no matter where they live, have a fair shot at a strong future.

Senator [Last Name], we are asking for your leadership. Please enforce the statutory role Congress established to protect students by taking steps to eliminate these illegal interagency agreements and ensure that decisions about federal educational responsibilities continue to be made lawfully, transparently, and in the best interest of America's children.

Prior to the recent and expansive set of interagency agreements, on a bipartisan basis, the Senate Appropriations Committee included language in their bill funding the Department of Education (FY 2026 Labor-HHS-ED) and protecting some of ED's functions from being transferred to other agencies. Given the wide-ranging scope of the illegal transfers since that agreement was made, we ask you to maintain and expand this provision to protect all programs and functions of ED, reverse the transfers now being implemented, and return ED to its full operation.

Our students deserve stability. Our states deserve clarity. And our nation deserves a federal government committed to supporting all states and protecting the civil rights and educational opportunities of all students.

Sincerely,

National

ACTFL
 Advocating 4 Kids Inc
 AFT, AFL-CIO
 All4Ed
 Alliance to Reclaim Our Schools
 American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education
 American Atheists
 American Humanist Association
 American Library Association
 American Occupational Therapy Association
 Arab American Institute (AAI)
 Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents
 Autistic Self Advocacy Network
 Black Down Syndrome Association
 Brothers Brunch Foundation Inc
 Brown's Promise
 Calculus Roundtable
 Center for Applied Linguistics

Center for Strong Public Schools
Children's Defense Fund
Clearinghouse on Women's Issues
Coalition on Human Needs
CommunityShare
Computer Science Teachers Association
Council for Exceptional Children
Council for Exceptional Children, Division of Research
Council of Administrators of Special Education
Council of Parent Attorneys and Advocates (COPAA)
CREATE for Education
Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund
Diverse Charter Schools Coalition
EDGE Consulting Partners
EdTrust
EducateUS
Education Law Center
Educational Theatre Association
Educators for Excellence
Empowering Pacific Islander Communities (EPIC)
Equal Justice Society
Feminist Majority Foundation
First Focus Campaign for Children
Foster Care Training Today
GLSEN
Got4titude
Hustle Mommies
Immigrant Connections
Innovate Public Schools
InnovateEDU
IXE ADVISING
Japanese American Citizens League
Jewish Council for Public Affairs
Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law
League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC)
Men of Definition, Incorporated
MLJC Educational Justice Center
Mothers Out Front
Muslim Public Affairs Council
NAACP
National Art Education Association

National Association for College Admission Counseling
National Association for Music Education
National Association of Counsel for Children
National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP)
National Center for Learning Disabilities
National Center for Youth Law
National Council of Asian Pacific Americans
National Council of Jewish Women
National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM)
National Down Syndrome Congress
National Education Association
National Equity Project
National Network for Arab American Communities
National Parents Union
National PLACE
National Science Teaching Association (NSTA)
National Urban League
National Women's Law Center
NBJC
Orange and Maplewood NAACP EDUCATION COMMITTEE
Parents for Public Schools
Partnership for the Future of Learning
Public Advocacy for Kids (PAK)
Public Advocacy for Kids (PAK)
Race Forward Action
READ 4 All
SchoolHouse Connection
Service Employees International Union (SEIU)
SHAPE America - Society of Health and Physical Educators
SOAR Educational Services
Society for Research on Educational Effectiveness
Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (SEARAC)
Teacher Salary Project
Teaching for Change
The Advocacy Institute
The African American Policy Forum
The Center for Learner Equity
The Education Neuroscience Foundation
The Institute for College Access & Success (TICAS)
The Learning Agency
The Sikh Coalition

UnidosUS
Voto Latino
Zephyr Impact

Alabama

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Great Alaska Schools
NAACP Alaska
NEA-Alaska

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Andra Nation
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ALL in Education

Arizona Education Association

Disability Rights Arizona

Office of District 5 of the Arizona House of Representatives

Office of District 24 of the Arizona House of Representatives

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 Arkansas Education Association
 Down Syndrome Connection of Northwest Arkansas
 Pine Bluff Education Association
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Anthony White
Texarkana, Arkansas

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California

Alliance for Children's Rights
Association of California School Administrators
Boy's & Girls Clubs of Carson
CA3 – California Afterschool Advocacy Alliance
California AfterSchool Network
California Down Syndrome Advocacy Coalition
California Partnership for the Future of Learning
California Teachers Association
Californians Together
CATTI (California Association for Teaching Leading and Learning)
Disability Rights CA
EDMO
EdTrust-West
Families in Action for Quality Education
Families in Schools
Inquiry & Learning for Change
John Burton Advocates for Youth
Live, Learn & Explore
Los Angeles Unified School District
Partnership for Children & Youth
Public Advocates Inc.
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San Francisco Education Alliance
San Francisco Parent Coalition
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Delaware State Education Association

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Florida Education Association
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Illinois Principal Association
Kids First Chicago
Partnership for College Completion
Raise Your Hand for Illinois Education
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EdTrust-Midwest
Flint Parent Collaborative
Hope Network's Michigan Education Corps
Indivisible Fighting 9
Michigan Education Justice Coalition
Michigan League for Public Policy
Teach Plus Michigan
Up North Advocacy
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Educators for Excellence
FPWA
Girls for Gender Equity (GGE)
Goddard Riverside
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Kings Against Violence Initiative
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New York State School Counselor Association
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Neenah, Wisconsin

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Madison, Wisconsin

Keri Galley
Salem, Wisconsin

Jim Lynch
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Beth Smith
Sparta, Wisconsin

Wyoming

Wyoming Education Association

Kimberly Amen
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