



February 19, 2025

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Dear Members of Congress:

We write on behalf of the more than 110 education organizations and institutions that are members of the [Committee for Education Funding \(CEF\)](https://www.edfunding.org) to **strongly oppose the Administration's actions in withholding and canceling Congressionally enacted investments in education, and to urge Congress to insist that the Administration implement Congress's laws requiring that these investments be made with fidelity.** The Administration's unilateral actions in recent weeks to abruptly halt funding for ongoing grants and contracts, as well as efforts to withhold funding from schools and universities unless they follow certain policy paths not currently required by existing law are already having profound and negative impacts on the delivery of education services and on students' lives.

Bipartisan legislation creating the Department of Education was explicit about its purposes and its limitations. [Public Law 96-88](#) states among its purposes "to strengthen the Federal commitment to **ensuring access to equal educational opportunity for every individual.**" It limited the Department's authority, stating that "No provision of a program administered by the Secretary or by any other officer of the Department shall be construed to authorize the Secretary or any such officer to exercise any direction, supervision, or **control over the curriculum, program of instruction, administration, or personnel of any educational institution, school, or school system**, over any accrediting agency or association, or over the selection or content of library resources, textbooks, or other instructional materials by any educational institution or school system, except to the extent authorized by law."

Most recently, the bipartisan [law](#) enacting current appropriations for the Department of Education provides specific totals for different accounts and programs, requiring these resources to be allocated as directed in the explanatory statement accompanying the legislation making explicit Congress' intent. It states that "Each department and agency funded in this Act **shall follow the directives set forth in this Act and the accompanying explanatory statement and shall not reallocate resources or reorganize activities except as provided herein...** Any action to eliminate or consolidate programs, projects, and activities should be pursued through a proposal in the President's Budget so it can be considered by the Committees."

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These laws, passed by bipartisan majorities of Congress, are clearly at odds with the Administration's recent actions to cancel ongoing competitive grants that increase the number of highly trained educators and to end Congressionally mandated work of the Institute of Education Sciences in evaluating student performance and identifying educational strategies that most effectively promote learning and student achievement. While it is the prerogative of any new Administration to set new priorities for education, there are legal and constitutional means to do so. Many of these recent efforts have been broadly ambiguous and legally dubious, creating unnecessary confusion and concern within all parts of the educational continuum. These actions are also unfairly penalizing education entities retroactively and have not provided schools and institutions with any meaningful opportunity to address or align with these rapidly shifting priorities.

For instance, CEF members have reported schools preemptively withholding funding for services for homeless children because they fear not being reimbursed for their ongoing costs, while others have pulled books from school libraries and removed history curriculum in case they conflict with recent executive actions. The country must work to improve student achievement, address ongoing shortages in the education workforce, and prepare the next generation for success. Now is not the time to disinvest in education, but rather to redouble our commitment to these and other critical downpayments for our nation's future.

Polling shows that the public [supports more education funding](#) and [does not want to eliminate the Department of Education](#). Congress enacted resources to support needed services for students, including efforts that make it possible for learners of all ages to access high-quality training or postsecondary education they need to support themselves, their families, and contribute to their local communities and our shared economy. These investments are lawfully guaranteed and must continue, even as Congress has yet to enact education funding for the current fiscal year and could be considering deep cuts to higher education funding this year. CEF urges Congress to insist that the Administration follow enacted laws and the intent of Congress and immediately cease withholding and canceling legally enacted investments in education. Further we call on Congress to maintain these vital investments going forward through the Congressional appropriations process outlined in our nation's founding documents.

CEF, the nation's oldest and largest education coalition, is a non-partisan and non-profit organization reflecting the entire education continuum from cradle to career. Our members are students and parents, teachers and school leaders, specialized instructional support personnel, school board members, universities and school districts, and associations working to ensure that education is adequately funded now and in the future.

Sincerely,



Steve Voytek
President



Sarah Abernathy
Executive Director