

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

May 22, 2025

The Honorable Donald J. Trump  
President  
The White House  
Washington, D.C. 20500

The Honorable Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
Washington, D.C. 20201

President Trump and Secretary Kennedy:

We write today to express serious concern over reports that your Administration considered proposals to eliminate federal funding for the Department of Health and Human Services' Head Start program in recent budget discussions. While we are relieved that the White House Office of Management and Budget's Fiscal Year 2026 proposal did not include this cut, that such an action was even contemplated underscores the vulnerability of this vital program under your Administration. As members of the California Congressional Delegation, we urge you to safeguard this critical program, which plays an irreplaceable role in supporting California's children and families, especially those facing economic hardship and systemic barriers.

California is home to one of the largest populations of Head Start children in the nation. In Fiscal Year 2023 alone, more than 94,000 children and pregnant women in California were served by Head Start and Early Head Start programs.<sup>1</sup> These services are not just beneficial—they are essential. From Los Angeles County to the Central Valley to rural tribal lands, Head Start provides comprehensive early learning, health, nutrition, and family support services to children who are disproportionately impacted by poverty and housing instability. These essential services support our state's economy by allowing parents to work and go to school, while giving our future workforce the strong start that they need to be successful later in life.

Since its founding in 1965, Head Start has supported more than 40 million children and their families nationwide—and millions in California alone.<sup>2</sup> Research continues to confirm what educators and parents have long known: Head Start works. It boosts school readiness, improves long-term academic outcomes, increases high school graduation and employment rates, and helps break cycles of generational poverty.

The elimination or reduction of Head Start funding would be catastrophic. In California, it would shut the doors of 1,835 Head Start and Early Head Start Centers and eliminate access to early education for tens of thousands of children—disproportionately children of color, English learners, children with disabilities, and those living in low-income and rural communities.<sup>3</sup> Thousands of parents would also lose their ability to go to work or school, and otherwise participate in the economy.

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://headstartca.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/CA-State-Fact-Sheet.pdf?>

<sup>2</sup> <https://headstart.gov/program-data/article/head-start-program-facts-fiscal-year-2023?>

<sup>3</sup> <https://headstartca.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/CA-State-Fact-Sheet.pdf?>

Head Start is not optional—it is a national commitment that must be honored. For these reasons, we urge you to reject any future attempts to weaken or eliminate this program and to ensure its continued success for the children and families who rely on it every day.

Sincerely,



---

Nanette Diaz Barragán  
Member of Congress



---

Alex Padilla  
United States Senator



---

Adam B. Schiff  
United States Senator



---

Pete Aguilar  
Member of Congress



---

Nancy Pelosi  
Member of Congress



---

Robert Garcia  
Member of Congress



---

Linda T. Sánchez  
Member of Congress



---

John Garamendi  
Member of Congress



---

Kevin Mullin  
Member of Congress



---

Mark Takano  
Member of Congress



---

Ted W. Lieu  
Member of Congress



---

Julia Brownley  
Member of Congress



---

Maxine Waters  
Member of Congress



---

Laura Friedman  
Member of Congress



---

J. Luis Correa  
Member of Congress



---

Ro Khanna  
Member of Congress



---

Mike Thompson  
Member of Congress



---

Norma J. Torres  
Member of Congress



---

Mark DeSaulnier  
Member of Congress



---

Juan Vargas  
Member of Congress



---

Gilbert Ray Cisneros, Jr.  
Member of Congress



---

Judy Chu  
Member of Congress



---

Derek T. Tran  
Member of Congress



---

Raul Ruiz, M.D.  
Member of Congress



---

Jared Huffman  
Member of Congress



---

Doris Matsui  
Member of Congress



---

Salud Carbajal  
Member of Congress



---

Brad Sherman  
Member of Congress



---

Ami Bera, M.D.  
Member of Congress



---

Jimmy Panetta  
Member of Congress



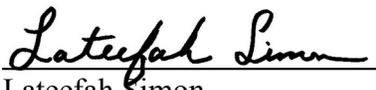
---

Zoe Lofgren  
Member of Congress



---

Eric Swalwell  
Member of Congress



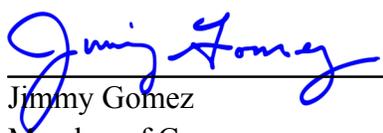
---

Lateefah Simon  
Member of Congress



---

Dave Min  
Member of Congress



Jimmy Gomez  
Member of Congress



Sydney Kamlager-Dove  
Member of Congress



Jim Costa  
Member of Congress



George Whitesides  
Member of Congress



Luz M. Rivas  
Member of Congress



Sara Jacobs  
Member of Congress



Scott H. Peters  
Member of Congress



Josh Harder  
Member of Congress



Adam Gray  
Member of Congress



Mike Levin  
Member of Congress



Sam P. Liccardo  
Member of Congress