

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

April 4, 2025

The Honorable Pete Hegseth
Secretary of Defense
U.S. Department of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-100

Dear Mr. Secretary:

We write regarding the Department of Defense's (DoD) implementation of the President's Executive Order of March 27, 2025, entitled, *Exclusions from Federal Labor-Management Relations Programs*, and its application with regards to the Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA). Specifically, we urge you to exercise your authority to exempt DoDEA employees from the President's Executive Order and maintain their existing collective bargaining protections given the critical work they do in supporting the recruitment, retention, and readiness of our military.

As one of only two federally operated school systems, DoDEA oversees and runs 161 accredited schools in 9 school districts across 11 foreign countries, 7 states, and the territories of Guam and Puerto Rico. Over 67,000 children of our service members and DoD civilians attend these schools served by over 14,000 employees dedicated to providing these students with a world-class education. In 2024, DoDEA schools once again ranked best in the country in both reading and mathematics under the National Assessment of Educational Progress, scoring 14 to 25 points higher than the corresponding national average scores.¹

DoDEA's success not only provides military families with the best available education for their children but also contributes directly to the recruitment, retention, and readiness of our service members and our military at large. DoDEA's educators and educational support staff work hard to educate and care for military children in academic environments designed and equipped to meet the unique challenges faced by military families, including deployments, relocations, and more. This ensures that warfighters, knowing that their children are well taken care of, can focus on their own service to the nation.

The President's Executive Order of March 27, 2025, delegates to the Secretary of Defense the authority to suspend the application of the order to subdivisions of the Department of Defense. We believe that DoDEA qualifies for such an exemption because it does not have a primary function related to "intelligence, counterintelligence, investigative, or national security

¹ "DoD Schools Ranked Best in the United States Again on Nation's Report Card," Department of Defense Education Activity, January 29, 2025, <https://www.dodea.edu/news/press-releases/dod-schools-ranked-best-united-states-again-nations-report-card>.

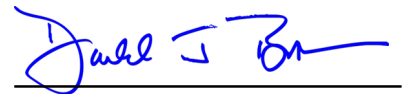
work.”² Given the fact that DoDEA schools are not located in the frontlines of any conflict and because DoDEA educators and personnel do not have security clearances or handle sensitive military information, we also believe that federal collective bargaining protections can be applied to DoDEA in a manner consistent with national security requirements and considerations.


Ensuring that DoDEA educators and personnel retain collective bargaining protections will ensure that DoDEA can continue to recruit and retain the best staff in support of its mission. Collective bargaining safeguards the public interest, and its history in DoDEA has demonstrated better outcomes for mission readiness, and stronger connections between military-connected families and those who serve them. We believe that granting DoDEA an exemption from the President’s Executive Order ultimately supports the warfighter and our military families. Given the President’s 15-day deadline for such a certification, we respectfully request your response by **no later than Thursday, April 10, 2025**.

Thank you for your consideration.

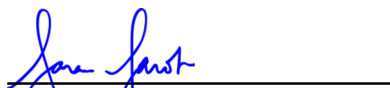
Sincerely,



Jim Tokuda
Member of Congress


Don Bacon
Member of Congress

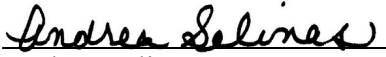

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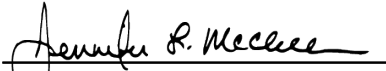

Sara Jacobs
Member of Congress


Andrew R. Garbarino
Member of Congress

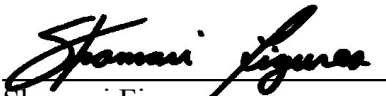
² “Executive Order 14251 of March 27, 2025, Exclusions from Federal Labor Management Relations Programs,” *Federal Register*, April 3, 2025, <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/04/03/2025-05836/exclusions-from-federal-labor-management-relations-programs>.



Andrea Salinas
Member of Congress



Jennifer L. McClellan
Member of Congress



Shomari Figures
Member of Congress



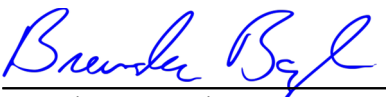
Ro Khanna
Member of Congress



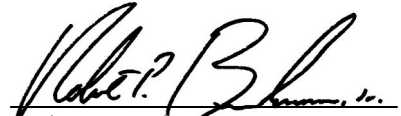
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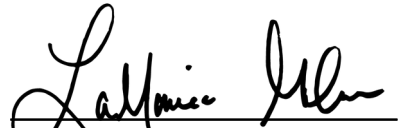
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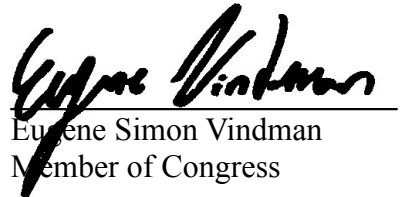
Brendan F. Boyle
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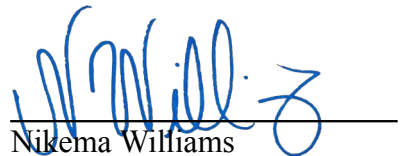
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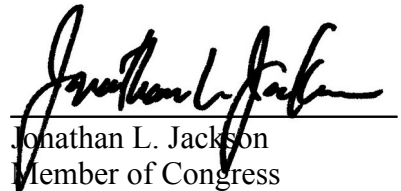
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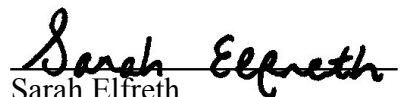
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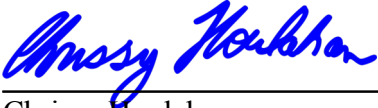
Sarah Elfreth
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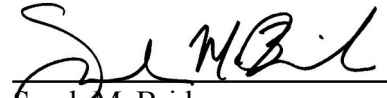
Shri Thanedar
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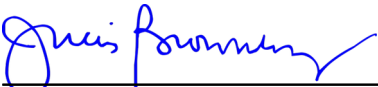
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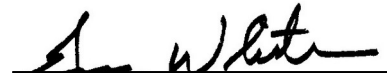
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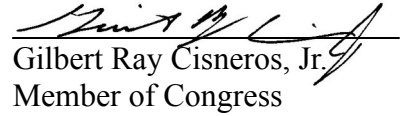
Sylvia R. Garcia
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SETH MOULTON
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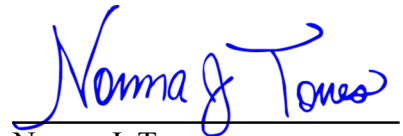
Eric Sorensen
Member of Congress



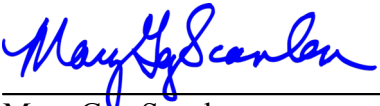
Gilbert Ray Cisneros, Jr.
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Mikie Sherrill
Member of Congress



Norma J. Torres
Member of Congress



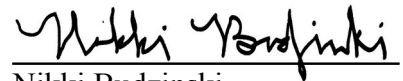
Mary Gay Scanlon
Member of Congress



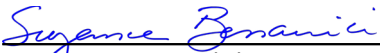
Angie Craig
Member of Congress



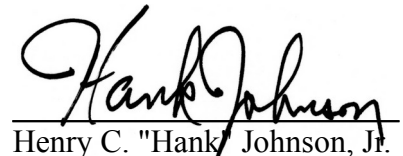
Salud Carbajal
Member of Congress



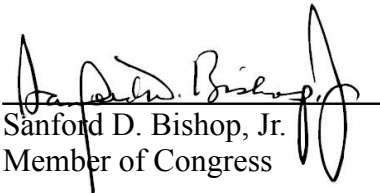
Nikki Budzinski
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Suzanne Bonamici
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Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
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Sanford D. Bishop, Jr.
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