

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

April 8, 2025

The Honorable Linda McMahon
Secretary
United States Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202

Dear Secretary McMahon,

We write to you with deep concern about how the President's recent Executive Order to dismantle the Department of Education will affect the disbursement of Impact Aid. As you know, public schools are funded through state and local property taxes. However, in school districts where there is a significant amount of federal land, schools lose funding because federal lands are exempt from paying state and local property taxes.

Recognizing the importance of public education as the foundation of our society and to ensure that all students receive a fair education, the Impact Aid program was signed into law by President Harry Truman in 1950. It is the nation's oldest K-12 federal education program.

As established by law, funds are appropriated by Congress and administered by the Department of Education. Impact Aid is one of the only major federal education programs that is not forward funded, meaning that funds are used in real time to pay staff and keep schools operating.

Impact Aid is disbursed to over 1,000 school districts across the country, and it reaches nearly 8 million students.¹ School districts that have military installations, Indian Trust and Treaty lands, federal low-rent housing facilities, Veterans Affairs facilities, national parks, and other U.S. government-owned properties located within their bounds miss out on thousands of taxpayer revenue every year, and Impact Aid helps to fill these gaps.

We are seeking clarification on how this program will be affected by the recent mass Reduction in Force (RIF) at the U.S. Department of Education, signed by the President on March 20, 2025. The reality is that the President has no right to eliminate the Department of Education as he is attempting to do without Congressional approval. These major staffing changes and potential disruption in program funding will adversely impact the educational outcomes of all students.

¹ <https://www.nafisd.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/Impact-Aid-Overview-Infographic-FY25.pdf>

Impact Aid dollars are especially necessary for our nation’s military families. The U.S. maintains at least one military installation in all 50 states.² While supplemental Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) Impact Aid is distributed separately, DoDEA relies on data provided by the Federal Impact Aid Program at the Department of Education.³ For these military-connected school districts, class sizes will rapidly increase, and low-income students and students with disabilities will be stripped of the resources they need to learn if funding is no longer distributed in a timely manner.

As stated in the President’s Executive Order, the intention of dismantling the Department of Education is to “return education authority to the States.”⁴ Impact Aid is a prime example of a federal program that skips bureaucratic tape as money is sent directly to school districts for their discretion to target funds wherever needs are the greatest.⁵ Ending this program or preventing its implementation directly contradicts the President’s intentions to give local communities and states more flexibility and freedom.

We are also concerned that the Department’s recent RIF saw a near total elimination of staff at the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), which the Impact Aid office relies upon to generate annual Local Contribution Rates (LCR). Without this data, recent progress in paying out final payments in a timely manner could be erased, with final payments possibly delayed by several fiscal years.

We demand the immediate reversal of any Executive Orders that would halt the disbursement of Impact Aid funds through the Department of Education.

Additionally, we request your answer to the following questions:

1. Have Impact Aid staff through the Department of Education been let go? If so, who plans to oversee the Impact Aid program in their absence?
2. Once the Department of Education is no longer operational, will Impact Aid be moved to the jurisdiction of another federal department?
3. School districts currently have to apply for Impact Aid through the Department of Education. If the Department is closed, where will districts send their applications?
4. Where will DoDEA get their data from for the Supplemental Impact Aid Program to eligible Local Education Agencies (LEAs) since they’ve previously relied on the Department of Education for this information?
5. When will FY 2025 funds be made available to the Impact Aid Program Office to disburse directly to eligible school districts?

² <https://installations.militaryonesource.mil/view-all>

³ <https://www.dodea.edu/education/partnership-and-resources/dod-impact-aid>

⁴ <https://www.whitehouse.gov/fact-sheets/2025/03/fact-sheet-president-donald-j-trump-empowers-parents-states-and-communities-to-improve-education-outcomes/>

⁵ <https://www.nafisdc.org/impact-aid-resources/about-impact-aid/>

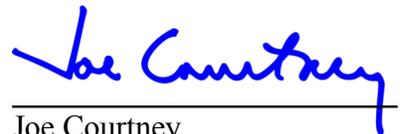
6. FY 2026 grant applications were submitted with a deadline of January 31, 2025. How will the International Activities Program (IAP) receive the LCR data that NCES provides to determine how much funding school districts will receive?

Students are the future leaders of our nation. It is the federal government's job to ensure the needs of all students are met so that public education can remain a stable and accessible foundation for everyone to succeed, no matter their background or where they live. We look forward to your prompt response and explanation of how Impact Aid will continue to serve its important mission for students across the country.

Sincerely,



Marilyn Strickland
Member of Congress



Joe Courtney
Member of Congress



Scott H. Peters
Member of Congress



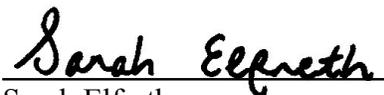
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Rashida Tlaib
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Juan Vargas
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JM Tokuda
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Lauren Underwood
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Emily Randall
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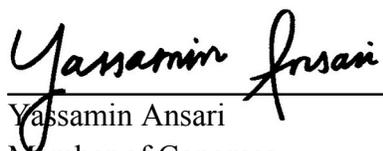
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John Garamendi
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Adam Smith
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Patrick Ryan
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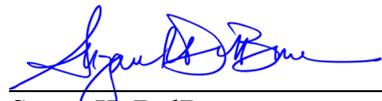
Betty McCollum
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Mikie Sherrill
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