

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 31, 2025

The Honorable Linda McMahon
Secretary
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue SW
Washington, D.C. 20202

Dear Secretary McMahon:

We write to express our serious concern with your efforts to undermine special education in the United States. Your moves to illegally shut down the U.S. Department of Education's efforts to administer and enforce the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* and potentially shift this work to another agency¹ would reverse decades of progress in how we support students with disabilities and their families. We urge you to immediately cease these misguided efforts.

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA), a landmark civil rights law that guarantees educational opportunities and protections for individuals with disabilities and helps to ensure that they have equal access to a free appropriate public education. As your own agency's website rightly points out, before the passage of this legislation, millions of children with disabilities were denied a public education and opportunities to learn.² When Congress created the U.S. Department of Education, lawmakers intentionally placed enforcement of IDEA under this new Department rather than the Department of Health and Human Services. This was done because of our recognition as a society that students with disabilities should be treated as individuals seeking equal opportunity for learning and independence, rather than as patients and second-class citizens.

Unfortunately, your planned actions would dismantle the support and accountability that states, schools, teachers, and families count on to meet the needs of students with disabilities. The Department of Education has unmatched expertise in protecting the rights of students with disabilities, aiding school districts in improving instructional practice for students of all abilities, and upholding federal accountability measures. Instead of valuing and building upon this expertise, you have gutted the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services and the Office for Civil Rights at the Department of Education. Your latest reported effort to illegally move IDEA responsibilities, oversight, and programming to another federal agency would further erode the protections that countless mothers, fathers, educators, advocates, and students with disabilities have fought for years to build.

¹ Laura Meckler, "Trump administration seeks to move special education to different agency," The Washington Post, October 21, 2025, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/education/2025/10/21/trump-special-education-move/>.

² U.S. Department of Education, "A History of the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act," <https://sites.ed.gov/idea/IDEA-History>.

We request that you provide detailed answers to the following questions by no later than November 14, 2025.

1. What authority do you believe that you have to move IDEA programs or responsibilities to another agency, contrary to explicit statute and Congressional intent?
2. To date, what steps have you or a member of your staff taken to move IDEA to another federal agency? Please provide all relevant documents.
3. What analysis have you completed that supports your claim that moving IDEA to another federal agency would improve outcomes for students with disabilities?
4. How have reductions in force in the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services and the Office for Civil Rights impacted the Department of Education's ability to fulfill its responsibilities under IDEA?

Once again, we urge you to immediately halt your efforts to illegally move IDEA responsibilities from the Department of Education to another federal agency, and we request that you redirect your efforts to rebuilding the Department of Education's infrastructure that schools and districts rely on to help ensure that students with disabilities receive the support and services they are entitled to under federal law.

Sincerely,



Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator



Lisa Blunt Rochester
United States Senator



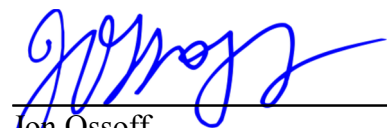
Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator



Jon Ossoff
United States Senator



Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senator



Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator



Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator



Adam B. Schiff
United States Senator



Andy Kim
United States Senator



Alex Padilla
United States Senator



Tina Smith
United States Senator



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



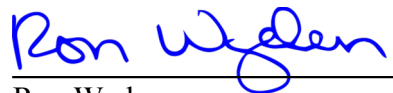
Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator



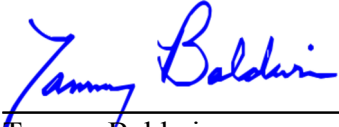
Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



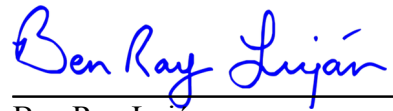
Jack Reed
United States Senator



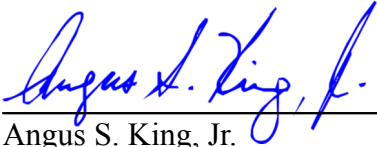
Ron Wyden
United States Senator



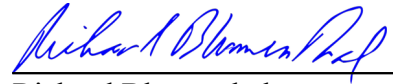
Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator



Ben Ray Lujan
United States Senator



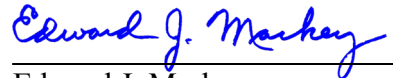
Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



Tim Kaine
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



Elissa Slotkin
United States Senator



John Hickenlooper
United States Senator



Ruben Gallego
United States Senator



Angela D. Alsobrooks
United States Senator