

October 23, 2025

The Honorable Bill Cassidy
Chairman, Senate Health, Education, Labor
and Pensions Committee
U.S. Senate

The Honorable Bernie Sanders
Ranking Member, Senate Health, Education, Labor
and Pensions Committee
U.S. Senate

RE: Executive violations of statutory requirements under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (as amended by the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act)

Dear Chairman Cassidy and Ranking Member Sanders,

On behalf of the 9.5 million children, youth, and young adults with disabilities (ages 0-21)¹ and the adults eligible for vocational rehabilitation across the U.S., the undersigned organizations write to request that you conduct an oversight hearing of the Executive Branch as it actively seeks to dismantle the U.S. Department of Education (Department) and decimate implementation of key education and disability laws. Actions taken to date are of great concern, have not been approved by Congress, and create immediate risks of harm to every qualifying individual with a disability and their family.

Through Reduction in Force (RIF) actions² and incentives to exit the federal workforce, the Secretary of Education has eliminated more than half of the positions at the Department, including nearly all positions in the Office for Civil Rights, and the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, which includes the Office of Special Education Programs and the Rehabilitation Services Administration. These actions have caused instability and led to unnecessary chaos for eligible people with disabilities, families³, and educators. The Secretary's undertakings stand in direct conflict with specific requirements under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the Rehabilitation Act, which designate the Secretary of Education as the *only agency head responsible* for ensuring states and agencies meet the conditions and requirements under these laws.⁴

The Secretary's actions break longstanding precedent around the Department's statutorily required duties to provide fiscal oversight, monitoring, compliance, provision of technical assistance, and more to states, and as noted, such changes have not been approved by Congress. Given this and recent reports of the Department beginning efforts to shift responsibilities to other agencies⁵ immediate oversight by Congress is essential. The public deserves to learn how the Secretary plans to fulfill the Department's full obligations under IDEA and other authorized disability laws.

We respectfully urge you to address our concerns with an oversight hearing as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

¹ 8 million children with disabilities are eligible under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (ages 0-21) at: [46th Annual Report to Congress on the Implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, U.S. Department of Education, \(2025\)](#), and 1.6 million children are eligible under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, U.S. Department of Education (2021), at: <https://www.ed.gov/media/document/crdc-student-disabilities-snapshotpdf-21420.pdf>

² See: U.S. Department of Education Reduction in Force, (March 11, 2025) at: <https://www.ed.gov/about/news/press-release/us-department-of-education-initiates-reduction-force>, and as reported by the press at: <https://www.usnews.com/news/education-news/articles/2025-10-20/impasse-at-the-education-department-where-does-it-stand-now-amid-shutdown-rifs>

³ As reported in *Education at Risk: Frontline Impacts of Trump's War on Students*, Senator Elizabeth Warren (July, 2025) by the Council of Parent Attorneys and Advocates, *Survey of Parents, Advocates, Attorney Advocates* (May, 2025) at: https://www.warren.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/education_at_risk_-_frontline_impacts_of_trumps_war_on_students.pdf

⁴ See: U.S.C. Title 20, Chapter 48, Subchapter II, Section 3417. Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services as it relates to authorized programs it oversees under 20 U.S.C Chapter 33 §§1400-1482, U.S.C. Title 29, Chapter 16, and U.S.C. Title 29 § 720, and U.S.C. Title 29 §794.

⁵ *Trump administration seeks to move special education to different agency*, Washington Post (October 21, 2025) at: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/education/2025/10/21/trump-special-education-move/>

Access Ready, Inc.
 All4Ed
 American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education
 American Association of University Women
 American Music Therapy Association
 American Occupational Therapy Association
 American Physical Therapy Association
 American Psychological Association
 APTA Academy of Pediatric Physical Therapy
 Assistive Technology Industry Association (ATIA)
 Association of People Supporting Employment First (APSE)
 Association of Programs for Rural Independent Living (APRIL)
 Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD)
 Autism Society of America
 Autism Speaks
 Autistic Self Advocacy Network
 Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (CHADD)
 Clearinghouse on Women's Issues
 Council for Exceptional Children
 Council for Learning Disabilities
 Council of Administrators of Special Education
 Council of Parent Attorneys and Advocates (COPAA)
 Cure SMA
 Deaf Equality
 Disability Belongs
 Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund
 Division for Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children (DEC)
 Easterseals, Inc.
 EdTrust
 Education Law Center
 Feminist Majority Foundation
 Fighting For My Voice, LLC
 Japanese American Citizens League
 Learning Disabilities Association of America
 Maternal Mental Health Leadership Alliance
 Muscular Dystrophy Association
 National Association for the Education of Young Children
 National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities
 National Association of Pupil Services Administrators
 National Association of School Nurses
 National Association of School Psychologists
 National Association of the Deaf
 National Center for Learning Disabilities
 National Council of Jewish Women
 National Disability Rights Network (NDRN)
 National Down Syndrome Congress
 National Rehabilitation Association
 SPAN Parent Advocacy Network (SPAN)

Start Early
 TASH
 TDI4Access
 The Advocacy Institute
 The Arc of the United States
 The Center for Enriched Living
 The Center for Learner Equity
 United Spinal Association
 ZERO TO THREE

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