

Dear Member of Congress:

The 54 undersigned education, civil rights, immigration, and other advocacy organizations write to oppose H.R. 5894, the House FY24 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act. The bill would cut funding for the Department of Education by 29%. Those funding cuts would devastate America's education system at a time when students are struggling to recover from the COVID pandemic to the detriment of students, educators, families, and the country as a whole. Supporting this bill means:

- Supporting cutting the Improving The Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged program (ESSA Title I) down to levels not seen in decades, leaving districts serving the most students from low-income backgrounds and students of color unable to provide meaningful educational opportunities, and pushing hundreds of thousands of teachers out of the classroom
- Supporting the elimination of Language Instruction For English Learners And Immigrant Students (ESSA Title III), the primary program aiding schools in educating English learners and immigrant students, a growing population who currently make up 10% of all students and rely on this funding to receive an education that helps enable them to fully participate in American society and maximize their potential
- Supporting the elimination of Preparing, Training, and Recruiting High-Quality Teacher, Principals, or Other School Leaders (ESSA Title II-A), the primary funding stream developing high quality teachers and school leaders, in the face of a nationwide teacher shortage impacting all 50 states
- Supporting the elimination of the Teacher and School Leader Incentive Grant Program and the Supporting Effective Educator Grant Program, both of which employ performance and evidence-based metrics to maximize teacher effectiveness, also in the context of overwhelming need within the profession
- Supporting the elimination of Teacher Quality Partnerships and the Augustus F. Hawkins Centers of Excellence, which strengthen recruitment pipelines and diversify our educator workforce, which is sorely needed in light of the majority of K-12 students being students of color, compared to only 1 in 5 teachers being a person of color
- Supporting a severe cut to Student Support And Academic Enrichment Grants (ESSA Title IV-A), which contains essential funding to help combat the youth mental health crisis
- Supporting the elimination of Federal Work Study, a bipartisan program helping over half a million students annually earn money to pay for college while they gain valuable work experience
- Supporting the elimination of Federal Supplemental Equal Opportunity Grants, an essential tool used by colleges to deliver help close financial aid gaps for 1.7 million of the lowest-income students on their campuses
- Supporting the elimination of Statewide Family Engagement Centers, despite a consistent focus on the important need to elevate parents and families' voice in their children's education

- Supporting a drastic cut to the Department of Education Office of Civil Rights, in the face of rising hate crimes on campus
- Supporting a major cut to the Full Service Community Schools program, an essential model for getting students and families the support and resources they need to succeed and thrive
- Supporting a debilitating cut to Federal Student Aid Administration that would leave millions of borrowers without support to pay their loans as the federal student loan system comes back online
- Supporting a failure to increase the maximum Pell Grant for the first time since 2012, the keystone of the federal financial aid system that helps millions of students from low-income backgrounds and millions of students of color afford a college education
- Supporting a failure to provide even modest increases to IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act), the primary program to support the education of disabled students, despite it being more important than ever given the challenges experienced by disabled students and their families during the pandemic
- Supporting a failure to supply even modest increases for all Title III and V funding streams supporting HBCUs (Historically Black Colleges and Universities), MSIs (Minority Serving Institutions), and TCUs (Tribal Colleges and Universities), all of which are engines of leadership and achievement for historically underrepresented students nationwide

In addition to eliminating a host of programs, the bill also includes a myriad of partisan, poison pill riders that would terminate funding for diversity, equity, and inclusion; remove consumer protections for student loan borrowers; and continue to target and exclude transgender students, among others. Advancing this bill is an attack on our public schools at a time when they are needed more than ever.

We urge every member of Congress to oppose this short-sighted and destructive piece of legislation and work to find compromise to fully fund the programs millions of students, educators, and families in every state rely on every day.

Sincerely,

American Atheists

American Federation of School Administrators

American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)

American Federation of Teachers

American Psychological Association Services

American School Counselor Association

Asian Americans Advancing Justice | AAJC

Center for American Progress

Clearinghouse on Women's Issues

Committee for Children
Council of Administrators of Special Education
EDGE Consulting Partners
Education Law Center-PA
Education Reform Now
Feminist Majority Foundation
First Focus Campaign for Children
GLSEN
Hildreth Institute
ImmSchools
Institute for Educational Leadership
Latinos for Education
Learning Forward
National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC)
National Association of Elementary School Principals
National Association of School Psychologists
National Association of Secondary School Principals
National Center for Families Learning
National Center for Learning Disabilities
National Center for Parent Leadership, Advocacy, and Community Empowerment (National PLACE)
National Consumer Law Center (on behalf of its low-income clients)
National Council of Jewish Women
National Council on Teacher Quality
National Education Association (NEA)
National Parents Union
National Rural Education Association
National Rural Education Association Coalition
National Summer Learning Association (NSLA)
New America's Education Policy Program
New Leaders
Ohio Student Association
Organizations Concerned About Rural Education

Parents as Teachers

Rebuild America's Schools Coalition

Rise

SchoolHouse Connection

Student Debt Crisis Center

Students United

Teach For America

The Century Foundation Higher Education Team

The Education Trust

The Hope Center at Temple University

The Institute for College Access & Success (TICAS)

TNTP

UnidosUS