

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

November 21, 2025

The Honorable Linda McMahon
Secretary of Education
United States Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20002

Dear Secretary McMahon,

We write to request information on the Department of Education's (the Department) efforts to support states and districts, as they serve students who are impacted by this Administration's immigration efforts. Since January, we have seen unprecedented immigration enforcement actions to effectuate President Trump's stated goal of creating the country's largest deportation operation.¹ We are deeply concerned about how these actions are impacting K-12 students, their families, and their communities.

The President campaigned on the premise that immigration enforcement activity would be targeted at undocumented immigrants who had committed violent crimes and were threats to public safety.² This has proven not to be the case.³ The Administration has instead focused its efforts on undocumented individuals, many of whom have committed no criminal offense, and are only guilty of the civil offense of being an undocumented immigrant.⁴ They have also detained a number of citizens and other legal residents.⁵

Many of the individuals recently targeted for immigration enforcement live in and among large communities of lawfully present immigrants and first-generation U.S. citizens. Many of those targeted have had children of their own who are U.S. citizens and young students. The chaotic manner in which raids and apprehensions are being carried out is injecting needless trauma into these communities, which then makes its way into schools and contributes to absenteeism. Federal officials have been authorized to conduct unexpected immigration raids, deportations,

¹ Robert Farley, *Trump's Agenda Deportation*, Factchecks (Nov. 21, 2024), <https://www.factcheck.org/2024/11/trumps-agenda-deportation>.

² See *id.* ("Homan has since clarified that the Trump administration will first target immigrants who have committed — or been accused of — crimes, a number he put at 1.5 million (though that appears to be too high).").

³ José Olivares & Will Craft, *Immigrants with no criminal record now largest group in Ice detention*, The Guardian, Sept. 26, 2025, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/sep/26/immigrants-criminal-record-ice-detention>.

⁴ *Id.* ("The agency's data also contradicts Trump administration officials' repeated narrative that the chief focus of the White House's agenda and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) dragnet is dangerous criminals.... Being undocumented in the US is not a crime. Rather it is a civil infraction.").

⁵ Nicole Foy, *We Found That More Than 170 U.S. Citizens Have Been Held by Immigration Agents. They've Been Kicked, Dragged and Detained for Days*, ProPublica (Oct. 16, 2025), <https://www.propublica.org/article/immigration-dhs-american-citizens-arrested-detained-against-will>.

and detainments of questionable legality.⁶ Some of these actions have been taken against individuals who had every indication that they were lawfully present in the country.⁷ Further reports suggest these abductions occur with unnecessary force, and detainees have been held under inhumane conditions.⁸

Schools themselves are also becoming scenes of immigration enforcement activity. In the first days of this Administration, the Department of Homeland Security revoked long standing policy exempting schools and churches from immigration enforcement activity.⁹ And recently the Supreme Court upheld the ability of federal officials to conduct immigration enforcement activities based on characteristics like race and location.¹⁰ Officials already acting with impunity will now be able to racially profile under the color of law near or around schools.

Taken in total, this enforcement activity is injecting chaos and trauma in the lives of children regardless of their immigration status. This spring, a seven-year-old U.S. citizen, her younger siblings, including one with stage 4 cancer, and her mother, were deported to Honduras.¹¹ A 16-year old student's mother and her seven-year-old sister were detained during a regular immigration check-in, leaving her to depend on her older brother as a guardian and provider.¹² A Massachusetts high school student was detained on the way to volleyball practice.¹³ He had no criminal record and was heavily involved with his community, yet was arrested and subjected to immigration proceedings. Despite his release after several days of detention, many students now fear doing everyday activities like attending practice may result in them being arrested.¹⁴ Recently in California, a father was reportedly arrested outside an elementary school while waiting to pick up his daughter, despite Immigration and Customs Enforcement stating that the

⁶ Kyle Cheney & Maya Ward, *Trump's new detention policy targets millions of immigrants. Judges keep saying it's illegal*, POLITICO, Sept. 20, 2025, <https://www.politico.com/news/2025/09/20/ice-detention-immigration-policy-00573850>.

⁷ Christian Farias, *The U.S. Governments' Extraordinary Pursuit of Kilmar Abrego Garcia*, New Yorker (Sept. 15, 2025), <https://www.newyorker.com/news/the-lede/the-us-governments-extraordinary-pursuit-of-kilmar-abrego-garcia>.

⁸ NBC News, *U.S. Immigration Tracker: Follow Arrests, Detentions, Border Crossings*, NBC News Data, (Aug. 18, 2025), <https://www.nbcnews.com/data-graphics/us-immigration-tracker-follow-arrests-detentions-border-crossings-rcna189148>

⁹ *Pineros Y Campesinos Unidos Del Noroeste v. Noem*, Case No. 6:25-cv-699 (D. Ore.) (Apr. 28, 2025) (“Longstanding federal policy under both Republican and Democratic administrations has consistently affirmed the importance of protecting havens—such as houses of worship, schools, health care clinics, social services and community-based organizations, and other public places where adults and children gather—from immigration enforcement activity except in limited circumstances.”).

¹⁰ *Noem v. Vasquez Perdomo*, 606 U.S._____, Sept. 8, 2025.

¹¹ Levy Marc, *ICE Deports Immigrant Mother of an Infant and 3 Children who are US Citizens*, Lawyers Say, Associated Press News, Apr. 26, 2025, <https://apnews.com/article/immigration-mothers-deported-d8c5c0353c18e9ee0c228ea15e02d759>

¹² Gwynn Hogan, *ICE Ships 6-Year-Old Queens Student and Mom to Texas Detention, Prompting School Principal's Plea for Their Release*, The City, Aug. 19, 2025, <https://www.thecity.nyc/2025/08/15/family-separation-26-federal-plaza-ice-ps-89/>.

¹³ Khaleida Rahman, *High School Student Arrested by ICE Day Before Graduation*, Newsweek, June 3, 2025, <https://www.newsweek.com/marcelo-gomes-high-school-student-arrested-ice-day-before-graduation-massachusetts-2080136>.

¹⁴ *A Massachusetts student arrested by ICE on his way to volleyball practice has been released*, Associated Press, June 6, 2025, <https://www.cnn.com/2025/06/05/us/massachusetts-teen-detained-ice-bond-granted>.

arrest occurred elsewhere and not on school grounds.¹⁵ The fear and uncertainty of the current moment led a Virginia teacher, beloved by his students and colleagues, to leave the country—and consequently his classroom—prematurely out of fear for his safety.¹⁶ Immigration and Customs Enforcement arrested a mother after she dropped off her child at a preschool in the Seattle suburbs.¹⁷ The school was closed the following day, with the director telling reporters that she was not sure when it would reopen.¹⁸

Recently, we have seen an escalation to the chaos. For example, in Chicago, an apartment building was raided and residents were attacked and arrested regardless of their immigration status.¹⁹ This incident is particularly concerning, because it occurred in the middle of the night and children were zip tied without clothing and then separated from their families.²⁰ Around the country undocumented students, documented legal immigrant students, and citizen students are facing the reality that they and their family may not arrive at or leave school safely.

Recent research has revealed that immigration enforcement actions have led to a public health emergency for millions of children with immigrant backgrounds and students who are citizens from mixed status families.²¹ Specifically, it has led to children experiencing complex trauma, attachment issues, and anxiety.²² Furthermore, many families have decided to keep students home in response to the recent immigration policy changes, contributing to the chronic absenteeism crisis that has been on the rise since the pandemic.²³

The Supreme Court's decision in *Plyler v. Doe* makes it clear that schools cannot turn away students based on their immigration status.²⁴ While this means schools must accept all students, regardless of their citizenship, the Administration's actions have K-12 students and families concerned for their safety at and on the way to school. Regardless of one's opinion of the

¹⁵ Brenden Tuccinardi & Tammy Murga, *San Diego Unified responds to ICE arrest outside Linda Vista Elementary*, KPBS, Aug. 15, 2025, <https://www.kpbs.org/news/border-immigration/2025/08/15/san-diego-unified-responds-to-ice-arrest-outside-linda-vista-elementary>.

¹⁶ Mary Beth Sheridan, *U.S. Sends Venezuelan Deportees to El Salvador's Harsh Prisons*, Wash. Post (May 2, 2025), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/immigration/2025/05/02/venezuelan-deportations-el-salvador-prison/>.

¹⁷ Claire Withycombe, *Immigration officials detain woman outside Issaquah immersion preschool*, Seattle Times (Oct. 24, 2025), <https://www.seattletimes.com/education-lab/immigration-officials-detain-woman-outside-issaquah-immersion-preschool/>.

¹⁸ *Id.*

¹⁹ Rebecca Schneid, *Inside the ICE Raid That Shocked Chicago—and What It Means for Immigration Enforcement*, TIME (Oct. 7, 2025), <https://time.com/7323334/ice-raid-chicago-pritzker-trump/>.

²⁰ *Id.*

²¹ Gladys Vargas, *UC Riverside Researchers Say Immigration Raids Taking Emotional Toll on Children*, Daily News (Aug. 8, 2025) https://www.dailynews.com/2025/08/08/uc-riverside-researchers-say-immigration-raids-taking-emotional-toll-on-children/?preview_id=6444253.

²² Gladys Vargas, *UC Riverside Researchers Say Immigration Raids Taking Emotional Toll on Children*, Daily News (Aug. 8, 2025) https://www.dailynews.com/2025/08/08/uc-riverside-researchers-say-immigration-raids-taking-emotional-toll-on-children/?preview_id=6444253.

²³ Mollenkamp, Daniel, *Immigration Raids Are Preventing Students from Attending School*, EdSurge (July, 22, 2025), <https://www.edsurge.com/news/2025-07-22-immigration-raids-are-preventing-students-from-attending-school>

²⁴ *Plyler v. Doe*, 457 U.S. 202 (1982)

Administrations immigration policy, it is undeniable that it will have a harmful and lasting impact on whole communities of school aged children.

The consequences of the Administration's actions show that our nation's students, families, and schools need resources to help in the days ahead. Therefore, we urge the Department to continue to uphold its obligation to provide the critical federal supports to address the needs of all students, including immigrant students, and those who serve them, as provided by Congress. For example, the English Language Acquisition program²⁵ is designed to help English learners including immigrant students meet academic standards and assist teachers in developing effective instructional programs for students.²⁶ Additionally, the McKinney-Vento (Education for Homeless Children and Youth) program provides critical funding for districts and schools, including referrals to health, housing and other services to support Pre K-12 youth and children experiencing homelessness.²⁷ Further, ESEA Title IV funds, which are designed to support student learning, promote safe and healthy school environments and fund innovative use of technology to support academic achievement for all students.²⁸ The Department can help states and districts understand how they can best use their federal funding to support all students—including immigrant students—as immigration officials continues their raids and other enforcement, providing states and districts with comprehensive guidance. Further, it is imperative that the Department reinstate guidance that helped schools understand and meet their obligation under Title VI of the *Civil Rights Act* by helping English language learners (ELL) “meaningfully participate in their educational programs and services.”²⁹

Given the impact this Administration's actions are having on students, and the federal government's role in providing resources to districts, we are requesting information on the Department of Education's actions to help ensure states, districts, and schools are adequately providing students with what they need during this time. Accordingly, please answer the following questions no later than December 5:

1. Given that the Department recently rescinded the guidance that helped schools understand their obligations to help ELL students, how will the Department ensure that states and school districts know whether they are complying with federal laws to support this population?
2. What specific steps will the Department take to identify and address the gaps in educational support for ELL students?

²⁵ 20. U.S.C. § 6812

²⁶ *Id*

²⁷ 42 U.S.C. § 1141 et seq

²⁸ 20 U.S.C. § 7111-7122

²⁹ U.S. Department of Education & U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Civil Rights, *Dear Colleague Letter: English Learner Students and Limited English Proficient Parents* (Jan. 7, 2015),

<https://www.ed.gov/media/document/dear-colleague-letter-english-learner-students-and-limited-proficient-parents-2015-35111.pdf>; Dana Goldstein, *Trump Administration Retracts Instructions on Helping English Learners*, N.Y.

Times (Aug. 21, 2025)

<https://www.nytimes.com/2025/08/21/us/politics/trump-administration-education-instructions-english-learners.html>

3. What guidance is the Department providing to states and districts to help ensure that schools are able to use Title IV funds to remain safe environments that encourage academic achievement and protect the rights of vulnerable immigrant students?
4. What specific action is the Department taking to support states and districts in addressing the mental health challenges faced by children from immigrant and mixed-status families, and all students, as a result of recent immigration enforcement actions?
5. What resources has the Department provided to districts and states that will help them prevent immigrant enforcement actions from exacerbating chronic absenteeism?
6. What resources has the Department provided states and districts who are concerned about their ability to fill teacher vacancies and retain teachers that allow them to fulfill legal requirements for teacher/student ratios and ELL supports due to the impact of the Administration's immigration policies?

We look forward to your timely response and expect your support for immigrant students, as well as other students impacted by this Administration's immigration enforcement actions.

Sincerely,

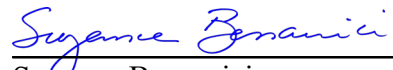


Robert C. "Bobby" Scott

Ranking Member

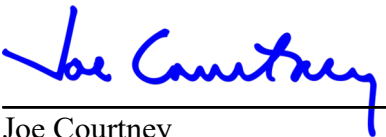
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Education and Workforce



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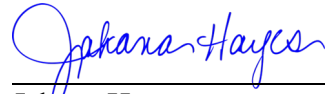
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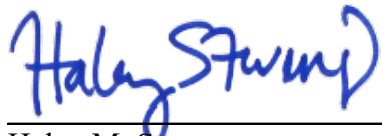
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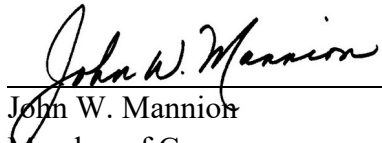
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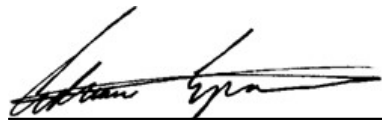
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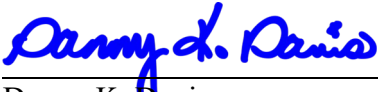
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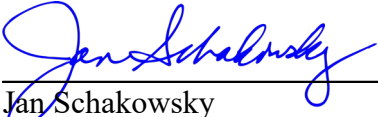
Delia C. Ramirez
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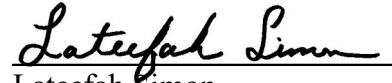
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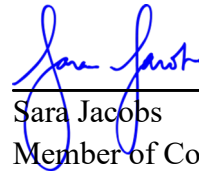
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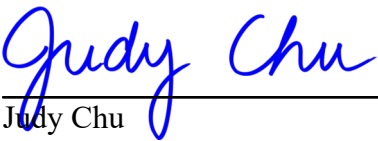
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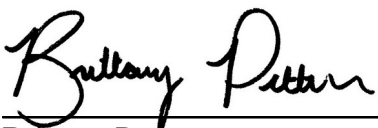
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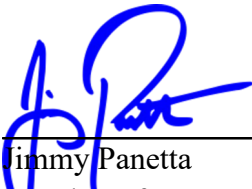
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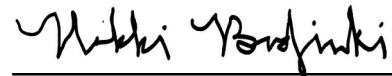
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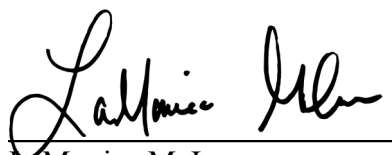
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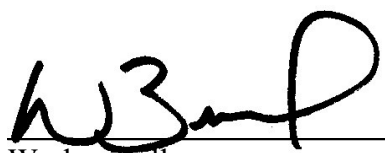
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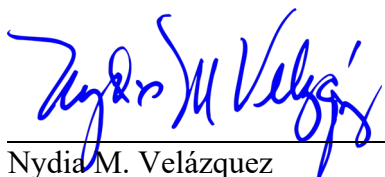
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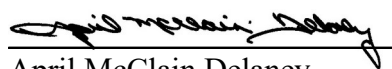
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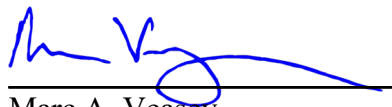
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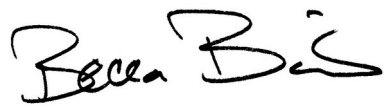
Joaquin Castro
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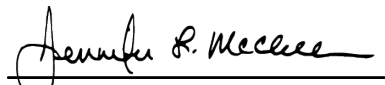
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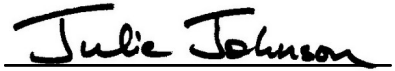
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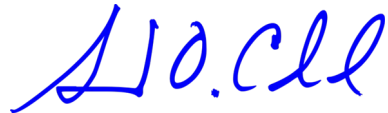
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Luz M. Rivas
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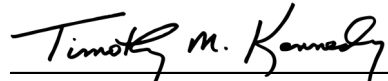
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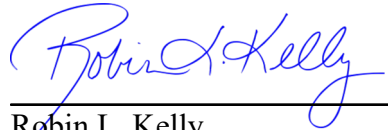
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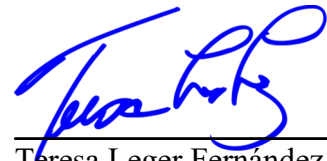
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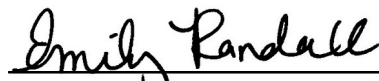
Teresa Leger Fernandez
Member of Congress



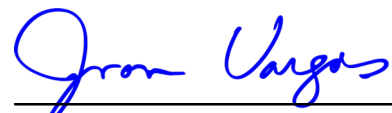
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