

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

May 12, 2026

The Honorable Linda McMahon
Secretary
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20002

Dear Secretary McMahon,

We write to express our strong opposition to the Department of Education's (Department) plan to eliminate the Office of English Language Acquisition (OELA).¹ We are very concerned that such a decision will adversely affect the approximately 5.3 million English learners (ELs) who rely on the programs in U.S. public schools supported by federal funds. Congress created OELA² to ensure that English learners and immigrant students develop English proficiency. It stretches credulity that the Department could determine whether such proficiency was occurring without having an office specifically designed to assess the learning of English. The Department's decision will undoubtedly disrupt the administration of programs designed to support English learners.

OELA is dedicated to implementing certain programs authorized under title III (Title III) of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965* (ESEA), including grants for English Language Acquisition and Language Enhancement. These grants support language instruction programs, professional development for educators, and other critical resources to support multilingual students.³ Eliminating OELA as a standalone office would weaken the Department's capacity to support ELs. In the absence of a designated office committed to the unique needs of ELs, these actions could significantly reduce the Department's ability to provide needed support to states and districts. OELA has historically served as a major federal resource for guidance and research for states and districts. Further, it is responsible for administering and monitoring nearly \$900 million in Title III-Part A funds. With the elimination of OELA, states and districts may face reductions in essential programs and services, including language instruction and teacher preparation programs.

¹ Letter from The Honorable Mary Christina Riley, Asst. Sec'y for Legislation and Cong. Affs. to Chairs and Ranking Members of the H. Comm. on Educ. & Workforce, and the S. Comm. on Health, Educ., Lab. & Pensions, (Feb. 13, 2026) <https://epe.brightspotcdn.com/06/1e/a7f3a7e24498a7262fa7bebf770e/signal-2026-04-13-114217.pdf>.

² 20 U.S.C. § 3423d.

³ 20 U.S.C. § 6812.

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States rely heavily on OELA for targeted guidance and technical assistance to support ELs and without a dedicated office, states may face major challenges sustaining these services. States also depend on the funding from OELA as the primary entity to provide specialized support for ELs. Reassigning these functions to different offices could cause disruptions and increased gaps and inefficiencies in service delivery of support for ELs, due to the lack of staff experience and expertise with OELA functions. Additionally, eliminating OELA would limit federal oversight and accountability under Title III, which would reduce the Department's ability to ensure that states are meeting their legal obligations to support ELs. These actions would further undermine Congress' intent to provide equitable learning opportunities for ELs. This closure, combined with the Department's reduction-in-force (RIF) actions, which decimated staff at OELA and the Office for Civil Rights, threatens to eliminate all federal support and enforcement of civil rights protections for ELs.

We strongly urge the Department to immediately stop its efforts to eliminate OELA. We demand that you keep Congress informed on any next steps and any actions that would further diminish the support for English Learners and their Congressionally authorized pursuit of English proficiency.

Sincerely,



Robert C. "Bobby" Scott
Member of Congress
Ranking Member, Committee
on Education and Workforce




Suzanne Bonamici
Member of Congress
Ranking Member,
Subcommittee on Early
Childhood, Elementary, and
Secondary Education



Joe Courtney
Member of Congress



Frederica S. Wilson
Member of Congress



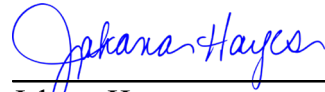
Mark Takano
Member of Congress



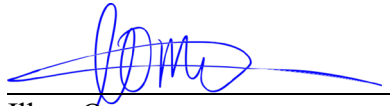
Mark DeSaulnier
Member of Congress



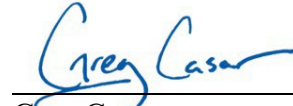
Lucy McBath
Member of Congress



Jahana Hayes
Member of Congress



Ilhan Omar
Member of Congress



Greg Casar
Member of Congress



Summer L. Lee
Member of Congress



John W. Mannion
Member of Congress



Adelita S. Grijalva
Member of Congress



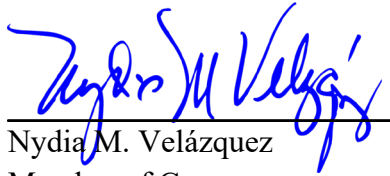
Nancy Pelosi
Member of Congress



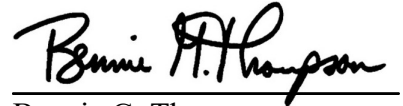
Jerrold Nadler
Member of Congress



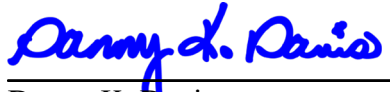
Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



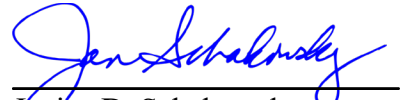
Nydia M. Velázquez
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Bennie G. Thompson
Member of Congress



Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress



Janice D. Schakowsky
Member of Congress



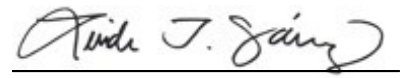
Mike Thompson
Member of Congress



Betty McCollum
Member of Congress



Stephen F. Lynch
Member of Congress



Linda T. Sánchez
Member of Congress



Doris Matsui
Member of Congress



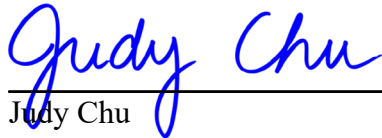
Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
Member of Congress



Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress



Paul Tonko
Member of Congress



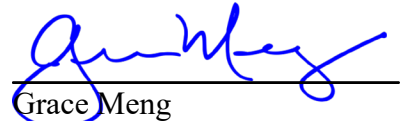
Judy Chu
Member of Congress



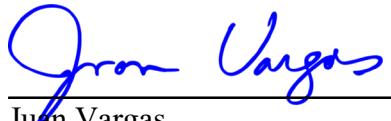
John Garamendi
Member of Congress



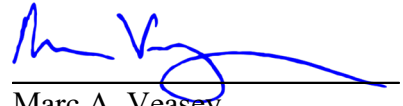
Joyce Beatty
Member of Congress



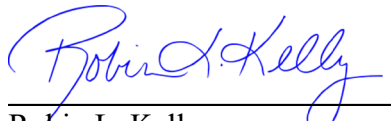
Grace Meng
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Juan Vargas
Member of Congress



Marc A. Veasey
Member of Congress



Robin L. Kelly
Member of Congress



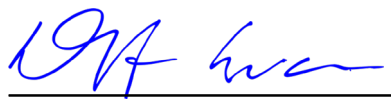
Ed Case
Member of Congress



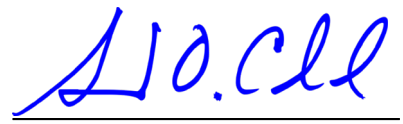
Ted W. Lieu
Member of Congress



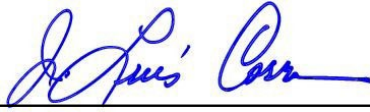
Seth Moulton
Member of Congress



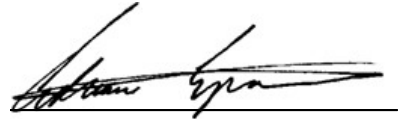
Dwight Evans
Member of Congress



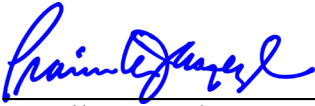
Salud O. Carbajal
Member of Congress



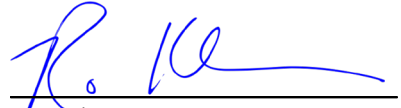
J. Luis Correa
Member of Congress



Adriano Espaillat
Member of Congress



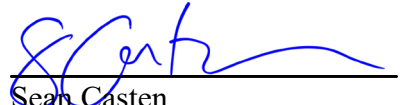
Pramila Jayapal
Member of Congress



Ro Khanna
Member of Congress



Darren Soto
Member of Congress



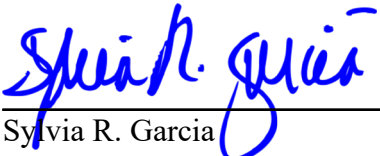
Sean Casten
Member of Congress



Veronica Escobar
Member of Congress



Jesús G. "Chuy" García
Member of Congress



Sylvia R. Garcia
Member of Congress



Rashida Tlaib
Member of Congress



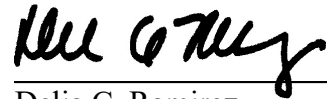
Jasmine Crockett
Member of Congress



Robert J. Menendez
Member of Congress



Kevin Mullin
Member of Congress



Delia C. Ramirez
Member of Congress



JM N. Tokuda
Member of Congress



Gabe Amo
Member of Congress



Maxine Dexter
Member of Congress



Analilia Mejia
Member of Congress