

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

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

February 17, 2026

Dear Secretary McMahon:

We write to follow up on the November 21, 2025 letter requesting information regarding the Department of Education’s (Department) efforts to support states and districts that serve students traumatized by this Administration’s immigration enforcement efforts.¹ Over the past year, this Administration has conducted unprecedented enforcement actions to effectuate President Trump’s stated goal of creating the country’s largest deportation operation.² Efforts by U.S. Immigrations and Customs Enforcement (ICE) have separated children from their families, disrupted school operations, and otherwise adversely affected students and families.³ We remain deeply concerned about the effect these ongoing enforcement efforts will have on student health, well-being, and school engagement.

Since the last letter, there have been several examples of educational spaces being affected by ICE activity. Children in Minneapolis, MN are acutely aware of their peer Liam Ramos, who was detained by ICE on his way home from school.⁴ Liam’s story, and others like it, are topics of student discussion in school hallways and on playgrounds around the country. Some communities are dealing with families being actively targeted near schools as they drop off or pick up their children. In one recent incident reported in Ypsilanti, MI, ICE arrested four parents near school grounds during student drop-off times.⁵ Out of concern for student safety, six South

¹ Letter from Reps. Robert “Bobby” Scott, Suzanne Bonamici et al., to The Hon. Linda McMahon, Secretary, U.S. Dep’t of Educ. (Nov. 21, 2025),

https://democrats-edworkforce.house.gov/imo/media/doc/scott_bonamici_letter_to_ed_re_immigration_raids.pdf

² Robert Farley, *Trump’s Agenda Deportation*, Factchecks (Nov. 21, 2024),

<https://www.factcheck.org/2024/11/trumps-agenda-deportation/>

³ Ileana Najarro & Alex Harwin, *The Widespread Effects of Immigration Enforcement on Schools in Charts*, EDUCATION WEEK (Nov. 24, 2025), <https://www.edweek.org/leadership/the-widespread-effects-of-immigration-enforcement-on-schools-in-charts/2025/11>

⁴ Elizabeth Shockman, *ICE Detains a 5-year-old Minnesota boy; school leaders say agents used him as ‘bait’*, MPRNews (Jan. 21, 2026), <https://www.mprnews.org/story/2026/01/21/ice-detains-5year-old-minnesota-boy-lawyer-says-agents-used-him-as-bait>

⁵ Simon Shaykhet, *Sheriff says ICE ‘targeted’ parents near bus stop in Ypsilanti during student drop-off times*, CNN (Jan. 28, 2026), <https://www.wxyz.com/news/sheriff-says-ice-targeted-parents-near-school-bus-stop-in-ypsilanti->

Seattle, WA public schools have initiated shelter-in-place protocols after receiving reports of ICE activity in nearby neighborhoods.⁶ In response to public concerns about school safety the Oregon legislature is considering legislation to require school officials to notify students, staff, and family when ICE has been spotted in their neighborhood.⁷ Across the country students are not only hearing secondhand of their peers affected by these situations, some are witnessing families, friends, and neighbors being detained. In short, student environments are being heavily disrupted by ICE enforcement efforts, disruptions we know will negatively impact their learning outcomes.

ICE tactics are causing undeniable harm to students, harm that will likely lead to years of trauma in school communities.⁸ School districts across the country have reported rises in anxiety, stress, and other mental health challenges in students.⁹ In a national survey of educators conducted at the beginning of this school year, nearly half of the participants that worked with immigrant families said their students “expressed fear or anxiety this school year as a result of federal immigration enforcement efforts. . .”.¹⁰ Additionally, 21 percent of educators in that same survey reported an increased need for counseling or support services.¹¹

In addition to the harmful effects on student mental health, ICE activity has led many families, including families with children that are U.S. citizens, to keep their children at home from school out of fear.¹² In that same national survey of educators, 24 percent reported reduced in-school student attendance and 18 percent reported reduced family or student attendance at out-of-school activities.¹³ Chronically absent students miss out not only on classroom learning but other social activities that are important for development.¹⁴ Furthermore,

during-drop-off-time

⁶ Jackie Kent, *Seattle schools have students shelter in place after reports of possible ICE activity*, KOMO News (Jan. 21, 2026), <https://komonews.com/news/local/seattle-schools-have-students-shelter-in-place-after-reports-of-possible-ice-activity-immigration-enforcement-elementary-school-high-campus-stem-children-community-warning-representative-arrest>

⁷ Julia Silverman, *With fears rising about ICE keeping students home, Oregon weighs school alert system*, The Oregonian (Feb. 05, 2026), <https://www.oregonlive.com/education/2026/02/with-fears-rising-about-ice-keeping-students-home-oregon-weighs-school-alert-system.html>

⁸ Letisha Marrero, *Separating Families. Terrorizing Communities. Upending Schools.*, The Education Trust (Jan. 30, 2026), <https://edtrust.org/blog/ice-raids-upending-schools-communities/>.

⁹ Sandra Sanchez, *Children’s Mental Health at Risk from ICE Raids, Detentions*, BORDER REPORT (Jan. 21, 2026), <https://www.borderreport.com/hot-topics/immigration/childrens-mental-health-at-risk-from-ice-raids-detentions/>.

¹⁰ Ileana Najarro & Alex Harwin, *The Widespread Effects of Immigration Enforcement on Schools in Charts*, EDUCATION WEEK (Nov. 24, 2025), <https://www.edweek.org/leadership/the-widespread-effects-of-immigration-enforcement-on-schools-in-charts/2025/11>.

¹¹ *Id.*

¹² Chelsea Bailey, *Absences and Loss of Innocence: ICE Raids Leave Behind a Heavy Weight in Minnesota Schools*, CNN (Feb. 3, 2026), <https://www.cnn.com/2026/02/03/us/minnesota-ice-raids-impact-schools-children/>; Dana Goldstein & Irene Casado Sanchez, *Immigration Raids Add to Absence Crisis for U.S. Schools*, N.Y. TIMES (June 16, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/06/16/us/immigration-raids-school-absences-deportation-fears.html>.

¹³ Ileana Najarro & Alex Harwin, *The Widespread Effects of Immigration Enforcement on Schools in Charts*, EDUCATION WEEK (Nov. 24, 2025), <https://www.edweek.org/leadership/the-widespread-effects-of-immigration-enforcement-on-schools-in-charts/2025/11>.

the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Plyler v. Doe* that all students in the United States have the right to public education regardless of their immigration status.¹⁵

Chronic absenteeism also results in many children missing out on a vital source of nutrition: school meals. Children who participate in the school meal program consume more whole grains, fruits, and vegetables and have a better overall diet than their peers.¹⁶ It has already been documented that fear of immigration enforcement can dissuade immigrant families from completing school meal applications.¹⁷ This is despite the fact that eligibility for free school meals, much like access to a public school education, is not dependent on a student's immigration status.¹⁸ In communities where we have overcome that misconception, ICE's actions may be leading to a retrenchment of food insecurity for immigrant students, another unnecessary trauma. Additionally, community organizations that offer food pantries and other nutrition assistance have reportedly seen a sharp decrease in immigrant communities accessing these services.¹⁹

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. We reiterate the request for a timely response to the inquiries from the November 21, 2025 letter. We continue to expect your support for all students, including immigrant students and students from mixed status families, harmed by this Administration's immigration enforcement actions.

Sincerely,



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



Suzanne Bonamici
Member of Congress

¹⁴ *The Pivotal Role of Schools in Child Development*, TEACHERS INSTITUTE (Nov. 19, 2023), <https://teachers.institute/childhood-growing-up/schools-child-development-role/>.

¹⁵ *Plyler v. Doe*, 457 U.S. 202 (1982)

¹⁶ *School Nutrition And Meal Cost Study: Volume 4 – Student Participation, Satisfaction, And Dietary Intakes*, U.S. DEP'T OF AGRIC. FOOD & NUTRITION SERV. (Apr. 2019), <https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/resource-files/SNMCS-Volume4-Summary.pdf>.

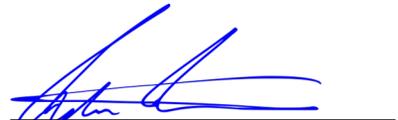
¹⁷ Cecibel Henriquez, *New Report Shows that Fear in Immigrant Communities Kept Children from Getting the Food They Needed*, NO KID HUNGRY (Dec. 9, 2021), <https://www.nokidhungry.org/blog/new-report-shows-fear-immigrant-communities-kept-children-getting-food-they-needed>; *Food Over Fear: Overcoming Barriers to Connect Latinx Immigrant Families to Federal Nutrition and Food Programs*, FRAC (Dec. 2020), https://frac.org/wp-content/uploads/NILC_Latinx-Immigrant-Families.pdf.

¹⁸ *Id.*; *Plyler v. Doe*, 457 U.S. 202 (1982)

¹⁹ Allyson LaPierre, *Food pantries in Maine report fewer clients amid ongoing ICE operations*, WGME, (Jan. 28, 2026) <https://wgme.com/news/local/food-pantries-in-maine-report-fewer-clients-amid-ongoing-ice-operations-immigration-customs-enforcement-president-donald-trump>



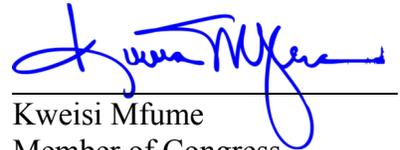
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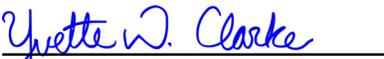
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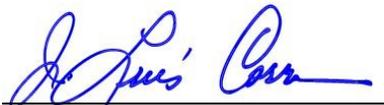
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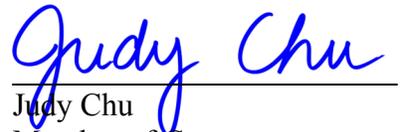
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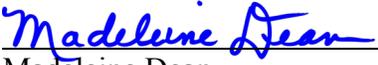
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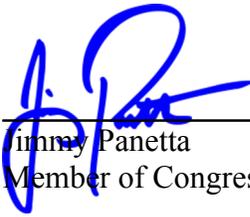
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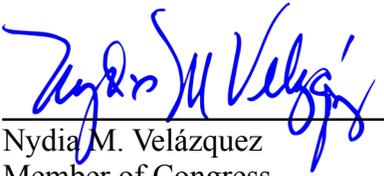
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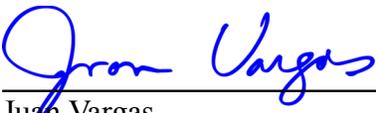
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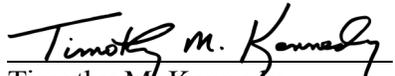
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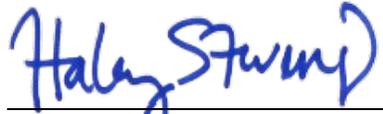
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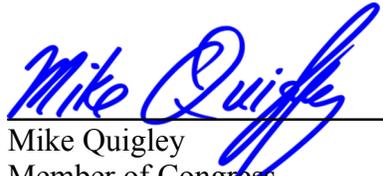
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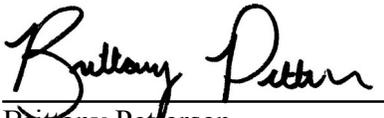
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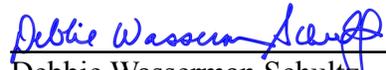
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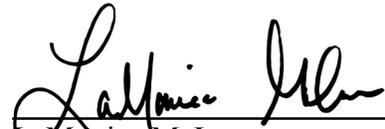
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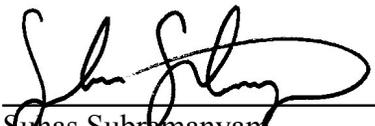
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