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September 30, 2025

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Dear Members of Congress:

We write on behalf of the more than 110 education organizations, institutions, and other members of the [Committee for Education Funding \(CEF\)](#) to **strongly oppose the deep and harmful proposed cuts to education funding contained in the fiscal year (FY) 2026 Labor-HHS-Education appropriations bill approved by the House Appropriations Committee on September 9**. We urge Congress to work in a **bipartisan fashion to enact legislation that ensures education programs can continue to operate successfully throughout the new fiscal year beginning on October 1**. The Senate Appropriations Committee approved a funding [bill](#) that protects education funding and programs while essentially freezing Education funding at the FY 2025 enacted level. While this falls well short of what is needed, this proposal would preserve critical funding for education and represents a pragmatic compromise that secured strong support from both parties.

In contrast, the House Committee FY 2026 bill was only able to garner support along party lines as it would slash funding for Department of Education programs by \$12.4 billion (15.6%) below the level enacted by Congress for the current year. CEF opposes this proposal in the strongest possible terms. It cuts support for preschoolers, students in elementary and secondary school, teachers and school leaders, adults who seek education and job training, Americans who rely on federal aid to go to college, and much more. The bill also cuts education-related programs in other agencies and lacks language to prevent the Administration from withholding education funding or taking other unilateral actions that undermine federal support for education—critical protections that were included in the Senate Committee's FY 2026 bill. The House bill's proposed cuts to education programs cuts are deeper than those in the Committee's FY 2025 version of this legislation, which similarly required damaging cuts that were never enacted.

Department of Education funding has declined over the last two years, and the FY 2025 enacted federal support is almost \$20 billion below the FY 2011 level in inflation-adjusted dollars. However, the exact level of federal funding and the plans for federal action going forward remain unclear, adding unnecessary uncertainty and disruption for state education programs, institutions of higher education, and other education grantees. This chaos derives from several actions:

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- 1) The Administration has withheld some FY 2025 education funding and failed to provide the required spending plan, leaving Congress and the public without transparency about which programs will receive their intended funding as intended by Congress.
- 2) Throughout this calendar year, the Administration has continued to lay off significant portions of the federal workforce, including many staff who work on education programs. The Office of Management and Budget suggests firing federal employees in a [memo](#) asking federal agencies to include more reductions in force (RIFs) and not just temporary furloughs if there is a lapse of funding. The [Office of Personnel Management's guidance this weekend](#) likewise directs agencies to "consider issuing RIF notices to all employees in programs, projects, or activities" that are not funded or do not fulfill the President's priorities. Yet these actions would be a *voluntary* Administration decision that would further harm the Department of Education's ability to fulfill its statutory obligations and support critical education programs.

CEF urges Congress to reject the damaging funding cuts in the House Appropriations Committee's FY 2026 Labor-HHS-Education bill. At minimum, we call on lawmakers to work together across party lines to pass full-year appropriations legislation that provides at least the education funding level in the Senate Appropriations Committee's bipartisan bill and ensures that federal education funding continues in a manner that allows effective planning and provision of vital services. These actions reflect what the public wants: polling shows that the public [supports more education funding](#) and [does not want to eliminate the Department of Education](#).

CEF, the nation's oldest and largest education coalition, is a non-partisan and non-profit organization reflecting the education continuum. Our members are parents and students, teachers and school leaders, specialized instructional support personnel, school board members, universities and school districts, and associations working to ensure that education is adequately funded.

Sincerely,



Steve Voytek
President



Sarah Abernathy
Executive Director