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FY 2025 Outside Witness Testimony submitted by the Committee for Education Funding (CEF), from executive director Sarah Abernathy and from Emily Crawford, Vectis DC director of federal advocacy and 2025 CEF president

Prepared for the Senate Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies, supporting education funding

May 23, 2024

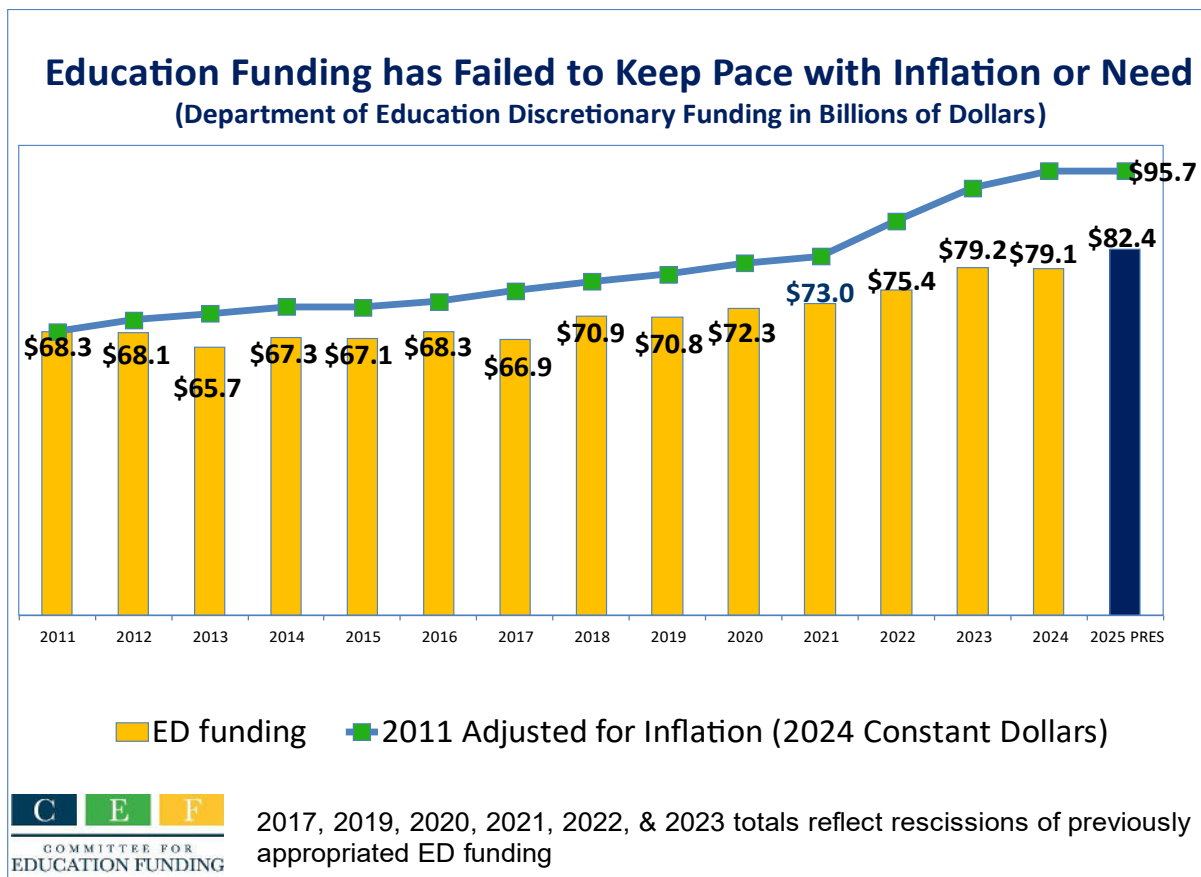
On behalf of the [Committee for Education Funding \(CEF\)](https://www.cef.org), we urge you to increase appropriations for the Department of Education and other education-related programs in the fiscal year 2025 appropriations bill for Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies to at least the level in the President's budget. The President's 2025 budget provides a \$3.3 billion (4.2 percent) increase in discretionary funding for Department of Education programs and even more modest percentage increases for education and workforce programs in other agencies. This funding, along with proposals for new multi-year mandatory investments in free preschool, child care, academic competitiveness, and college affordability, would increase education spending to about 2.3 percent of the federal budget.

Historically, the U.S. has spent an average of only about 2 cents of every federal dollar on education although [polling](#) shows a majority of Americans support greater investments in education and oppose cuts to education funding. Education funding failed to keep pace with inflation under years of tight discretionary caps imposed by the 2011 Budget Control Act, resulting in a large funding gap as needs and costs grew. Even the President's requested discretionary funding increases would leave 2025 appropriations for the Department of Education at a level that is \$13 billion below the 2011 level in inflation-adjusted dollars, as shown in the chart on the next page.

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Recent data highlight the need for greater investments to support teaching and learning. The [“Nation’s Report Card”](#) found that in 2022 and 2023, both 9-year-olds and 13-year-olds had lower reading and math scores than they did in 2020. Almost half of public schools felt their school was understaffed at the beginning of the current school year, and 79 percent of those with vacancies reported difficulty hiring qualified teachers, according to a National Center for Education Statistics [School Pulse Panel survey](#). [Undergraduate enrollment](#) for first-year students under age 20 remains 5 percent below 2019 levels. The impact of the pandemic on education will remain even though the extra federal investments are ending.

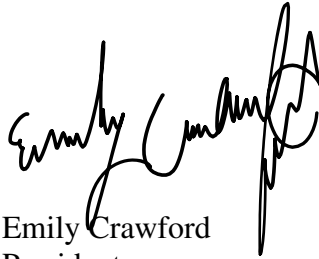


We urge Congress to address long under-funded education priorities that span the education continuum from early education, elementary and secondary education, adult and career technical education, post-secondary education, workforce development, and out-of-school educational services. Investments in education are among the best the country can make. They reap rewards immediately in terms of student achievement and knowledge, and over the long term in greater economic output, community engagement, and a well-informed populace prepared for a global economic environment.

The existing statutory cap for non-defense discretionary funding is inadequate to address education needs for 2025. Congress cut education funding in 2024, but to keep America strong and able to compete in the global economy, CEF is asking Congress to use all funding options to

increase investments in education by at least the amount in the President's 2025 request. That modest increase represents a necessary down payment towards meeting national needs.

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 with the common goal of ensuring that education is adequately funded.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Emily Crawford". The signature is stylized with a large, prominent "E" and "C".

Emily Crawford
President

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Sarah Abernathy". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Sarah Abernathy
Executive Director