



June 26, 2024

The Honorable Robert Aderholt
Chairman, Appropriations
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education and Related Services
U.S. House of Representatives
2358-B Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member, Appropriations
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education and Related Services
U.S. House of Representatives
2358-B Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Members of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Services,

On behalf of the undersigned organizations - representing the nation's public school superintendents, educational service agencies, and rural educators – we write ahead of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education (LHHS) markup to express our opposition and urge you to **reject this FY25 proposal** that cuts critical education funding that districts and students across the country rely on.

This effort to cut education funding comes at a time when schools are facing a unique set of challenges. School districts are working to provide critical mental health supports for students and address chronic absenteeism while simultaneously dealing with administrative difficulties such as staff shortages, increased costs and a slate of new federal regulations that require additional funding and training. Investment in education always matters. However, at this moment in time with so many demands on school funding, it is essential that students and educators receive – *at the very least* – consistent, stable federal funding. Instead, this shortsighted bill proposes to reduce funding for and, in some cases completely eliminate, programs that support students by ensuring they have access to high-quality educators and the resources they need to learn.

Title I, Part A is the backbone of the premier federal K-12 education law ESEA. The breadth and depth of Title I make it uniquely positioned for supporting districts in their work to support children—particularly those in poverty—in meeting challenging state academic content and achievement standards. Districts rely on Title I funds to support some of our nation's most vulnerable students. A 25% cut to Title I, including a rescission of \$1 billion in advance funding that school districts are planning to use for this school year, is unacceptable.

Additionally, Title II, Part A provides necessary resources to grow the skills and expertise of current teachers and provide important induction and mentoring programs for new educators that keep them in the classroom. Decades of research has found that low-income and students of color are most likely to have inexperienced teachers. Title II, Part A closes these gaps by ensuring students have greater access to high-quality, effective educators. This proposal to eliminate Title II is particularly ill-timed, given the current teacher recruitment and retention crisis. It reflects a complete disconnect between policymakers and the real challenges confronting school and district administrators.

AASA, AESA and NREA are all proud members of the IDEA Full Funding Coalition and appreciate that this proposal includes a small increase for the program. However, a modest increase of \$30 million is wholly insufficient in meeting the needs of districts. We hope the subcommittee will acknowledge the importance of IDEA and provide it with the robust funding that Congress promised but has failed to provide since the bill was passed in 1975. While we also appreciate the recognition and increase in funding for other critical programs like Title IV, Part A; Rural Education Achievement Program (REAP); and Impact Aid, this bill is just taking from one important program to give to the next and all schools will suffer.

As the stewards of local dollars, we understand implicitly the challenge in front of Congress to pass FY25 appropriations under the constraints of the *Fiscal Responsibility Act*. However, the cuts proposed in this bill will have a devastating impact on students and schools, forcing districts to make impossible decisions about where to eliminate services and personnel students need.

We urge you to vote against this damaging proposal and continue to protect investment in K-12 education.

Sincerely,

AASA, The School Superintendents Association
Association of Educational Service Agencies (AESA)
National Rural Education Association

CC: House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Service