

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

November 14, 2025

The Honorable Linda McMahon
Secretary of Education
United States Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20002

The Honorable Russell Vought
Director
Office of Management and Budget
1650 17th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20006

Dear Secretary McMahon and Director Vought:

We write to urge you to permanently retain the workers in the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE) who administer programs for students experiencing homelessness and students in foster care.

About 1.4 million students in the U.S. experience homelessness each school year¹ and about 270,000 school-aged children and youth are in foster care.² Beyond the challenges of meeting their basic needs, these students face unique barriers to education including difficulty enrolling in school without a fixed address or necessary documentation, lack of transportation, frequently changing schools, and chronic absenteeism.³ Federal programs administered by OESE, like the Education for Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) program, are one of few lifelines for children experiencing homelessness. The EHCY program provides funding to help states and districts address the unique barriers students face by ensuring they are able to enroll in school, reliably access transportation to school even if their address changes, and access other educational supports and community resources.⁴

OESE also provides invaluable support to students experiencing homelessness and children and youth in foster care through Title I, Part A.⁵ Title I, Part A requires that a portion of funding is set aside for students experiencing homelessness and requires EHCY and Title I programs to partner to ensure that children and youth experiencing homelessness receive the educational supports they need.⁶

On October 10, 2025, almost every OESE worker was reportedly fired, including the staff who administer the EHCY program and who oversee educational protections for students in foster care.⁷ Congress reversed these firings and prevented future Reductions-in-Force through January 30, 2026.⁸ Now, beyond reinstating workers to comply with temporary injunctions or continuing resolutions, we urge the Department of Education to permanently preserve EHCY and foster care program staff. Without these workers, the Department of Education will be unable to fulfill its legal responsibilities under Section 724 of the McKinney-Vento Act, which protects access to education for students experiencing homelessness.⁹ Without these workers, states and districts will be unequipped to implement EHCY funding and other critical support that students are entitled to. As a result, over one million children and youth may lose access to the educational services they rely on as an

¹ <https://schoolhouseconnection.org/article/2025-fact-sheet-educating-children-and-youth-experiencing-homelessness>

² <https://www.ed.gov/teaching-and-administration/supporting-students/special-populations/students-foster-care/students-in-foster-care>

³ <https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/federal-state-resources-students-experiencing-homelessness-brief>

⁴ <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/budget-cuts-threaten-federal-protections-for-homeless-students/>

⁵ <https://schoolhouseconnection.org/article/title-i-part-a>

⁶ <https://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?path=/prelim@title20/chapter70/subchapter1&edition=prelim>

⁷ <https://schoolhouseconnection.org/article/trump-administration-fires-oese-staff-including-homeless-education-office>

⁸ <https://www.politico.com/news/2025/11/12/house-votes-to-reopen-government-after-43-day-shutdown-00649927>

⁹ <https://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?path=/prelim@title42/chapter119/subchapter6/partB&edition=prelim>

essential source of stability. The irreplaceable loss of dedicated professionals at OESE with deep subject-matter expertise will cause lasting harm to the education and well-being of students experiencing homelessness and students in foster care.

Congress has a strong history of bipartisan support for the EHCY program. Both the House and Senate have proposed appropriating \$129 million in fiscal year 2026 to sustain its work.^{10,11} In accordance with Congressional support and authorization for the EHCY program, we urge the Department to permanently maintain the OESE workers who are vital to ensuring that students experiencing homelessness and students in foster care can access the educational opportunities they deserve.

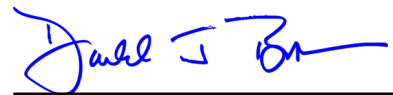
Sincerely,



Summer L. Lee
Member of Congress



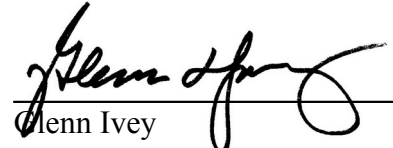
Jimmy Panetta
Member of Congress



Don Bacon
Member of Congress



Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



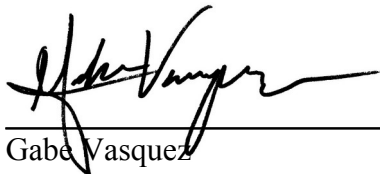
Glenn Ivey
Member of Congress



Delia C. Ramirez
Member of Congress



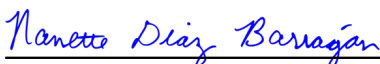
Dwight Evans
Member of Congress



Gabe Vasquez
Member of Congress



Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress



Nanette Diaz Barragán
Member of Congress



Rashida Tlaib
Member of Congress

¹⁰ <https://schoolhouseconnection.org/article/house-bill-preserves-homeless-education-funding-while-cutting-overall-education-funding>

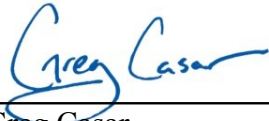
¹¹ <https://schoolhouseconnection.org/article/senate-committee-advances-ehcy-funding-rejects-block-grant>



Marilyn Strickland
Member of Congress



Emanuel Cleaver, II
Member of Congress



Greg Casar
Member of Congress



Kevin Mullin
Member of Congress



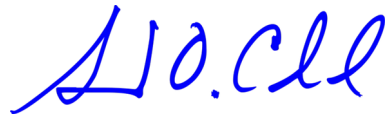
Gwen S. Moore
Member of Congress



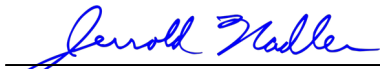
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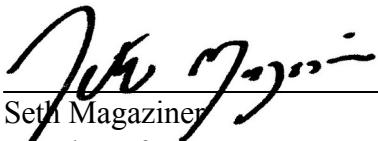
Mike Quigley
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Shri Thanedar
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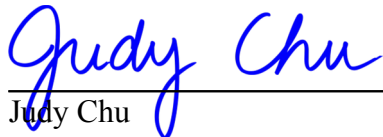
Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
Member of Congress



Seth Magaziner
Member of Congress



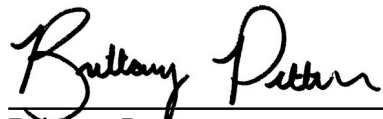
Madeleine Dean
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Judy Chu
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