

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. RES.

Expressing support for the local public K–12 schools of the United States and condemning any actions that would defund public education or weaken or dismantle the Department of Education.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. SCHIFF (for himself, Mr. SANDERS, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. PADILLA, Mr. PETERS, Ms. ROSEN, Ms. SLOTKIN, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. WELCH, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. WARNOCK, Mr. WYDEN, and Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on

RESOLUTION

Expressing support for the local public K–12 schools of the United States and condemning any actions that would defund public education or weaken or dismantle the Department of Education.

Whereas the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6301 et seq.) (referred to in this preamble as the “ESEA”) defines free public education as education that is “provided at public expense, under public supervision and direction, and without tuition charge” and “provided as elementary or secondary education in the applicable State or to preschool children”;

Whereas publicly funded local K–12 schools serve millions of students and families, including in rural and geographically isolated areas, providing economic opportunity for all;

Whereas 90 percent of students in prekindergarten through 12th grade in the United States attend a public school, as well as 95 percent of students with disabilities;

Whereas State and local funding for public K–12 schools varies dramatically within States and across the United States, creating additional need among schools in under-resourced communities;

Whereas the role of the Federal Government in public education has historically been to level the playing field by creating equity of opportunity for all students, regardless of their background, ability, or the State in which they are educated;

Whereas Federal funding plays a critical role in narrowing funding gaps for disadvantaged student groups, providing integrated and wraparound supports for students and families, and helping students meet challenging State academic standards and succeed in education and the workforce;

Whereas 2025 marks the 60th anniversary of the ESEA and the 50th anniversary of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act, now known as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq.) (referred to in this preamble as the “IDEA”);

Whereas the Department of Education Organization Act (20 U.S.C. 3401 et seq.), enacted in 1979, declares “that the establishment of a Department of Education is in the public interest, will promote the general welfare of the

United States, will help ensure that education issues receive proper treatment at the Federal level, and will enable the Federal Government to coordinate its education activities more effectively”;

Whereas the Department of Education serves approximately 100,000 public K–12 schools across the country, which collectively educate more than 49,000,000 students;

Whereas reading and math scores and college degree attainment have substantially increased since the Department of Education was established;

Whereas the Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights enforces Federal laws prohibiting discrimination and harassment, and has investigated record numbers of incidents of discrimination and hate in recent years despite employing only about half of the staff the Office had when it was originally established;

Whereas the Department of Education administers grants under the IDEA to help public schools serve more than 7,500,000 students with disabilities, a substantial financial commitment that cannot reasonably be assumed by State or local governments, and provides monitoring and oversight to hold States accountable for providing a free appropriate public education for students with disabilities;

Whereas the Department of Education provides equitable supplementary funding through grants under part A of title I of the ESEA to more than 51,000 public schools serving concentrated populations of students from low-income families in rural, suburban, and urban communities;

Whereas the Department of Education provides funding through subtitle B of title VII of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11431 et seq.) to support the identification, enrollment, attendance, and success of nearly 1,400,000 students experiencing homelessness;

Whereas the Department of Education administers grants under part C of the IDEA to support the delivery of early intervention services to over 900,000 infants, toddlers, and preschoolers with disabilities;

Whereas the Department of Education directly invests in the special education teachers of the United States through grants under part D of the IDEA to support personnel development to improve services and results for children with disabilities;

Whereas the Department of Education supports parent training and information centers under part D of the IDEA to help students with disabilities and their families understand their rights and navigate the special education process;

Whereas the Department of Education directly invests in people with disabilities to pursue post-secondary education, competitive, integrated employment, and independent living by providing vocational rehabilitation services through Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 720 et seq.);

Whereas the Department of Education provides protections from disability-based discrimination for students and staff in any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance, so all individuals with disabili-

ities can access equal education and employment opportunities.

Whereas the Department of Education provides funding under part F of title IV of the ESEA to support full-service community schools, which partner with local stakeholders, parents, and families to provide common-sense, locally-driven solutions to the challenges students and families face, and are another major step forward in reclaiming the promise of public education;

Whereas the Department of Education provides vital support to thousands of rural school districts through the Rural Education Achievement program under part B of title V of the ESEA, which funds both the Small, Rural School Achievement grant program and the Rural and Low-Income School grant program;

Whereas the Department of Education directly invests in the quality and effectiveness of nearly 90 percent of teachers and approximately 20 percent of school leaders nationwide through grants under part A of title II of the ESEA, ultimately improving retention rates, addressing the nationwide educator shortage, and improving student achievement;

Whereas the Department of Education provides supplementary funding to help more than 5,000,000 English language learners achieve language proficiency and meet State academic standards through grants under part A of title III of the ESEA;

Whereas the Department of Education provides supplementary funding to help tens of thousands of public schools provide well-rounded education, technology sup-

port, and school safety measures through grants under parts A, B, and F of title IV of the ESEA;

Whereas the Department of Education provides funds to strengthen and support career and technical education programs for more than 8,200,000 secondary students across the country through title I of the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2321 et seq.);

Whereas the Department of Education provides grants under part E of title IV of the ESEA to support the work of Statewide Family Engagement Centers, which carry out parent education initiatives, family engagement programs, and family-school partnerships;

Whereas the Department of Education provides necessary oversight so that students have access to targeted interventions and services;

Whereas the Department of Education provides protections from sex-based discrimination for students and staff in any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance, so all individuals can access equal educational and employment opportunities;

Whereas the Department of Education invests in research to understand and disseminate information about the interventions and practices that are most effective at providing excellent educational opportunities for all students;

Whereas the Department of Education employs the smallest staff of any Cabinet agency, with the lowest overall staff-to-budget ratio of all 15 Departments;

Whereas dismantling or relocating any major offices within the Department of Education may substantially disrupt program administration and create a delay or loss of vi-

tally important funding for public schools across the United States; and

Whereas, without Federal investment, State and local educational agencies would be forced to enact drastic funding cuts that will disproportionately affect students from rural areas, low-income families, students of color, and students with disabilities, as well as harm United States competition in the global economy: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2 (1) strongly supports Federal investment in
3 public K–12 schools and the students and families
4 served by such schools;

5 (2) affirms that the Department of Education
6 plays a vital role in the public education system of
7 the United States;

8 (3) affirms that the Federal Government’s in-
9 vestment is important to the success of public
10 schools, and investment in public education should
11 not be diverted, including through the use of vouch-
12 ers, to privately-run K–12 schools; and

13 (4) condemns any executive or legislative action
14 that would—

15 (A) dismantle or relocate major offices
16 within the Department of Education;

17 (B) dismantle or relocate the Department
18 of Education; or

1 (C) reduce Federal funding for public edu-
2 cation, block major Federal grant programs for
3 education, or transfer funding burdens for edu-
4 cation to State and local governments.