

OpenVoiceNews U.S.

Transparent. Unbiased. Yours.

Shutting Down Support for Students

June 30, 2025

– Categories: Human Rights



President Trump's plan to eliminate the U.S. Department of Education has sparked strong concern among Democratic senators, educators, and disability rights advocates. In a recent letter to Education Secretary Linda McMahon, 23 Democratic senators led by Sen. Lisa Blunt Rochester of Delaware demanded answers about how the legal rights of students with disabilities will be protected if the department is shut down.

The senators warn that transferring special education responsibilities to the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), as the administration proposes, could seriously weaken the federal government's ability to support students with disabilities. "Children with

disabilities need educational professionals, not medical administrators,” the senators wrote. “The Department of Education has the experience and infrastructure to enforce these rights. HHS does not.”

At the core of the debate is the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), a federal law that guarantees students with disabilities access to a “free and appropriate public education.” Lawmakers and advocates are worried that layoffs and cuts at the Education Department where nearly half of the staff has already been dismissed will prevent the government from properly enforcing this law.

Adding to the concern, the Trump administration has cut more than \$1.5 billion from education-related research and special education teacher training programs. Many school districts are already facing a shortage of special education teachers, and experts say these cuts will make it harder to recruit and train qualified staff.

While President Trump argues the move will reduce federal spending and bureaucracy, critics say eliminating the department could do long-term damage to students who rely on its services the most. “These cuts won’t just impact budgets,” one advocate said. “They will impact real students, in real classrooms, who depend on these supports to succeed.”

Congress will ultimately decide whether the Education Department can be dismantled. For now, parents, teachers, and lawmakers are calling for greater transparency and reassurance that students with disabilities will not be left behind in the process.