

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 17, 2026

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito  
Chair  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human  
Services, Education, and Related Agencies  
170 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human  
Services, Education, and Related Agencies  
141 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chair Capito and Ranking Member Baldwin:

As the subcommittee considers the Fiscal Year 2027 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies appropriations bill, we request you provide the highest possible amount of funding for the Office of Federal Student Aid (FSA) within the Department of Education (ED or the Department).

FSA is the largest provider of student financial aid in the nation, serving over 42 million people and overseeing a nearly \$1.7 trillion student loan program.<sup>1</sup> FSA is responsible for managing the financial assistance programs authorized under Title IV of the *Higher Education Act*, which includes work-study, grant funding, and loan funds for students seeking college or a career and technical education.<sup>2</sup>

Increasing funding for FSA this fiscal year is particularly critical given that FSA's funding has been stagnant for the past four fiscal years, severely undermining FSA's ability to implement critical programs.<sup>3</sup> These challenges have been worsened by the Trump Administration's illegal attack on the Department, including drastic cuts to its workforce and efforts to unlawfully outsource ED's responsibilities to other agencies.<sup>4</sup> Despite these efforts to circumvent and undermine Congress' control of the purse, Congress has a responsibility to pass laws and appropriate funding to support agencies that help the American people.

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of Education, "Fiscal Year 2026 Budget Summary," p. 49, <https://www.ed.gov/media/document/fiscal-year-2026-budget-summary-110043.pdf>; Federal Student Aid, "Federal Student Loan Portfolio," <https://studentaid.gov/data-center/student/portfolio>.

<sup>2</sup> Federal Student Aid, "About Us," <https://studentaid.gov/about>.

<sup>3</sup> The Century Foundation, "Stagnant Funding Has Broken the Office of Federal Student Aid and Failed Students," Tiara Moultrie, March 22, 2024, <https://tcf.org/content/commentary/stagnant-funding-has-broken-the-office-of-federal-student-aid-failed-students/>; On File with the Office of U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren.

<sup>4</sup> The Washington Post, "Education Department, with mass layoffs, cuts nearly half its staff," Laura Meckler and Danielle Douglas-Gabriel, March 22, 2025, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/education/2025/03/11/education-department-employees-layoffs-trump/>; Letter from U.S. Senators Patty Murray, Tammy Baldwin, Bernard Sanders et al. to ED Secretary Linda McMahon, December 3, 2025, [https://www.appropriations.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/251203\\_letter\\_to\\_secretary\\_mcmahon\\_re\\_interagency\\_agreements.pdf](https://www.appropriations.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/251203_letter_to_secretary_mcmahon_re_interagency_agreements.pdf); U.S. Department of Education, "U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of the Treasury Announce Historic Federal Student Assistance Partnership," press release, March 19, 2026, <https://www.ed.gov/about/news/press-release/us-department-of-education-and-us-department-of-treasury-announce-historic-federal-student-assistance-partnership>.

FSA is responsible for managing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). The agency processes over 17 million FAFSA forms each year to help students achieve the American Dream.<sup>5</sup> It is vital that FSA have the necessary staff and funding to ensure that students and families experience a smooth and stress-free process while applying for financial aid.

Additionally, FSA is responsible for managing the federal student loan portfolio, including the unprecedented student loan default and delinquency crisis that has grown under the Trump administration.<sup>6</sup> Delinquency and default rates have soared, with one out of every five student loan borrowers in default and one in four borrowers with a payment due being reported as delinquent.<sup>7</sup> It is critical that FSA has sufficient resources to support student loan borrowers.

In sum, FSA's responsibilities have increased to protect students and borrowers, but its federal funding has remained stagnant. The lack of adequate resources creates more barriers for students to start and continue their education. We believe this funding request is required to provide FSA with the resources it needs to fulfill its goal of ensuring that all eligible students and families can access federal student grants, loans, and work-study funds to pursue education and training beyond high school. Thank you for your time and consideration of this request and your continued support in the strengthening of FSA.

Sincerely,



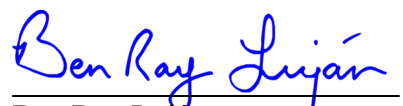
Elizabeth Warren  
United States Senator



Mazie K. Hirono  
United States Senator



Jack Reed  
United States Senator



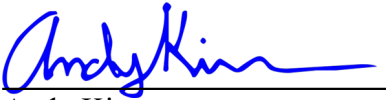
Ben Ray Lujan  
United States Senator

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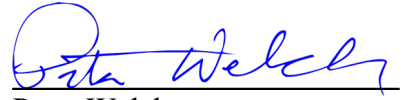
<sup>5</sup> Federal Student Aid, "About Us," <https://studentaid.gov/about>.

<sup>6</sup> The Century Foundation, "Trump's Student Loan Delinquency Crisis, Unmasked," Peter Granville, Eduard Nilaj, Jennifer Zhang, and Aissa Canchola Bañez, February 20, 2026, <https://tcf.org/content/report/trumps-student-loan-delinquency-crisis-unmasked/>.

<sup>7</sup> *Id.*



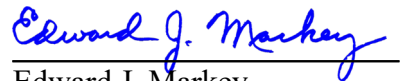
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Lisa Blunt Rochester  
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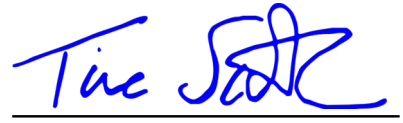
Adam B. Schiff  
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Ruben Gallego  
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Tina Smith  
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Sheldon Whitehouse  
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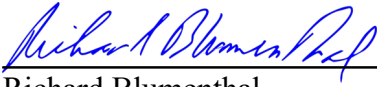
Chris Van Hollen  
United States Senator



Bernard Sanders  
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Tammy Duckworth  
United States Senator



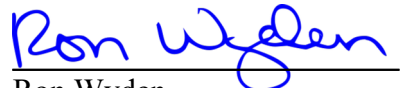
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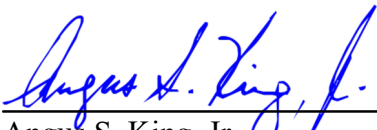
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