



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 13, 2025

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NDSC Calls on Congress to Stop the Purge of U.S. Department of Education and Reject any Plan to Dismantle IDEA

The National Down Syndrome Congress (NDSC) calls on Congress to protect the rights of students with disabilities and stop the dismantling of the U.S. Department of Education (the “Department”). The Department has initiated a purge of career employees with deep-seated expertise that will impact nearly 50% of the Department’s workforce. This action will have very negative consequences for students, educators, and the future of our education system, and especially students with disabilities. Many of these employees are experts who provide technical assistance to states, protect the rights of students, conduct critical research and oversee the implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The role and critical functions of the U.S. Department of Education have been misrepresented by many outlets. Please learn the facts [here](#).

Proposals are also being considered in Congress to amend IDEA and “block grant” the funding. This would funnel IDEA money directly to states and local school districts with no federal oversight and states would be free to use the funds for other unrelated purposes. Block granting could result in the loss of Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and civil rights protections under the IDEA. Other proposals would distribute the Department’s offices across multiple federal agencies which would make it harder to coordinate efforts between programs that serve students with disabilities. NDSC opposes any proposals to dismantle the Department, distribute its offices among other federal agencies, or block grant IDEA.

Disability laws and special education have always had bipartisan support since President Gerald Ford signed the first version of the IDEA in 1975. Since then, education for students with disabilities has consistently had strong bipartisan support in Congress. We call on Republicans and Democrats in Congress to stop the purge of federal employees and the cancelling of programs, grants and contracts and work together on bipartisan reforms to the country’s education system.



NDSC Executive Director Jim Hudson stated, “NDSC recognizes that a strong Department of Education is essential for students with Down syndrome and other disabilities. We urge Congress to continue its longstanding bipartisan support for the education of students with disabilities by opposing any actions or legislation to dismantle or weaken the Department.”

“We have made great progress for children with disabilities in the last 50 years under IDEA. Gutting the U.S. Department of Education staff and funding, and dismantling IDEA, would be a grave disservice to children with disabilities and their families. It is time to stop the purge and work together to improve education for all students.” said Stephanie Smith Lee, NDSC Policy & Advocacy Co-Director and former Director of the Department’s Office of Special Education Programs under President George W. Bush.

About the National Down Syndrome Congress

The National Down Syndrome Congress (NDSC) is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to an improved world for individuals with Down syndrome. Founded in 1973, the NDSC is a leading national resource of support and information for anyone touched by or seeking to learn about Down syndrome, from the moment of a prenatal diagnosis through adulthood. The purpose of the NDSC is to promote the interests of people with Down syndrome and their families through advocacy, public awareness, and information, empowering individuals and families from all demographic backgrounds and reshaping the way people understand and experience Down syndrome. The National Down Syndrome Congress is dedicated to an improved world for individuals with Down syndrome.

For more information on the NDSC, check out our website or follow us on social media.

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