



THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION
WASHINGTON, DC 20202

March 17, 2023

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Ranking Member DeLauro:

Thank you for your letter of January 19, 2023, requesting details regarding the potential impact of proposed budget cuts on the economy, neighborhoods, and other essential government functions that keep people healthy and safe.

President Biden's FY24 Budget lays out a detailed plan to invest in America, continue to lower costs for families, protect and strengthen Social Security and Medicare, and reduce the deficit. Meanwhile, Congressional Republicans have proposed unprecedented cuts in fiscal year (FY) 2024 funding for key services, programs, and protections such as education, public safety, research, nutrition and more. Cuts on this scale would have very real and damaging impacts on our families, our communities, our economy, and our competitiveness—undermining a broad range of critical services the American people rely on in their everyday lives.

Your letter specifically references a plan to cap fiscal year 2024 discretionary spending at the fiscal year 2022 enacted level. Your letter makes clear that the impact of such a plan on agency appropriation levels is at this time unknown, as the specifics of the plan have not been publicly released. If we assumed that defense funding would be shielded from budget cuts under this plan, it would equate to a cut of about 22 percent to non-defense discretionary funding. Accordingly, we analyzed impacts at two levels: 1) FY 2022 enacted and 2) 22 percent below the currently enacted level for FY 2023.

As you know, the Federal government has long played a critical role in supporting States, school districts, and postsecondary institutions in meeting the needs of students, especially underserved students and children in under-resourced communities, children with disabilities, English learners, and those experiencing homelessness. While representing but a small portion of overall education funding nationwide, Federal resources help States and school districts fill gaps in State and local support and meet critical needs for our most vulnerable students. From supporting additional staff positions and educational materials, to expanding after school programming, providing access to life-changing education and training, and helping students afford college, the Federal investment in education makes a positive difference in children's lives every day.

The Department of Education has examined several of our most significant programs to assess potential impacts resulting from 1) receiving FY 2022 funding and 2) receiving funding 22 percent below currently enacted levels.:

- **ESEA Title I Grants to LEAs** – a reduction to the FY 2022 enacted level would cut \$850 million in funding from this program – a cut equivalent to removing more than 13,000 teachers and service providers from classrooms serving low-income children; a 22 percent reduction from the currently enacted level would cut approximately \$4.0 billion in funding, impacting an estimated 25 million students and reducing program funding to its lowest level in almost a decade – a cut equivalent to removing more than 60,000 teachers and related service providers from classrooms serving low-income students.
- **IDEA Grants to States** – a reduction to the FY 2022 enacted level would cut \$850 million in funding from this program – a cut equivalent to removing more than 13,000 teachers and service providers from classrooms serving low-income children; a 22 percent reduction from the currently enacted level would cut more than \$3.1 billion in funding, impacting an estimated 7.5 million children with disabilities and reducing Federal support to its lowest share since 1997 – a cut equivalent to removing more than 48,000 teachers and related services providers from the classroom.
- **Title II-A (Supporting effective instruction State grants) and Title IV-A (Student support and academic enrichment grants)** – a reduction to the FY 2022 enacted level would cut more than \$35 million for these activities; a 22 percent reduction from the currently enacted level would cut more than \$500 million in annual support for teachers and students, curtailing learning opportunities for teachers and school leaders, and hampering school districts' efforts to promote a well-rounded education for students in safe schools.
- **Pell Grants** – a reduction to the FY 2022 enacted level would likely have a minimal effect on students and parents, while a reduction of 22 percent from currently enacted levels would likely reduce the maximum Pell award by nearly \$1,000, decreasing aid to all 6.6 million Pell recipients and eliminating Pell Grants altogether for approximately 80,000 students. Cutting the discretionary funding by 22 percent without cutting the maximum award would eliminate the surplus and create a \$17 billion shortfall by 2026. The program cannot function with a shortfall that large.
- **Administering Student Financial Aid** – a reduction of 22 percent from currently enacted levels would cut \$468 million in federal support to determine, disburse, and service student aid. This level of funding would have devastating effects on student and parent interactions with the Department, as well as on their ability to successfully apply for and receive student aid. However, even if funding were kept at the FY 2022 enacted level, more than 40 million student loan borrowers would be impacted through decreased service hours and longer turnaround times to make changes to student loan repayment plans, or obtain a deferment, forbearance, or discharge of student loans. More than 17.6 million students and parents applying for student aid and calling the Department for information could experience multiple-hour wait times and reduced call center hours, and student aid applicants requesting specific assistance with the FAFSA®, student loan promissory notes, PLUS loan applications, or other student aid applications could see their requests take weeks longer to process. Additionally, the oversight of the more than

5,500 schools and enforcement of the Higher Education Act would suffer, putting taxpayer dollars at risk.

- **Federal Work-Study Program (FWS)** – a reduction to the FY 2022 enacted level would provide less aid for all program recipients and eliminate FWS financial support for approximately 11,000 students; a cut of 22 percent from the currently enacted level would provide less aid for all program recipients and eliminate Work-Study financial support for approximately 85,000 students. Schools would be forced to make impossible decisions around whether to cut essential positions reliant on FWS funds or the amounts that students are able to earn under the program.

Should you have additional comments or questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Office of Legislation and Congressional Affairs at (202) 401-0020.

Sincerely,



Miguel A. Cardona, Ed.D.
U.S. Secretary of Education