

February 4, 2026

Dear Members of Congress,

As state policymakers from across the country, many of whom are parents and/or former early educators, we are horrified by the administration's freezing of child care, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) funds in five states and its unjustified implementation of so-called 'Defend the Spend' measures making it harder for all 50 states to access child care funds.

We urge you to swiftly exercise your legislative oversight authority over administrative actions and demand that the administration immediately restore full child care funding and end intimidation and enforcement tactics that target child care providers.

The Trump administration is using unfounded and politically-manufactured claims of fraud to take actions that will directly harm children and worsen the affordability crisis, making child care harder to find and more expensive for families and making it even harder for child care programs to stay open. Across the five states affected by the funding freeze (MN, CO, IL, CA, NY), more than 300,000 children could lose access to child care. In addition, the administration has doubled down on its "["Defend the Spend"](#)" policy, requiring all 50 states to provide burdensome and unnecessary documentation and verification before receiving child care funds. Early reporting indicates that 'Defend the Spend' measures are already causing delays in child care funding in many other states, including a program in Missouri that [had to temporarily close](#).

In taking these actions, the administration is putting children, families, and providers at risk—destabilizing families, threatening the closure of small child care businesses, and damaging our broader economy, all while doing nothing to address the ongoing child care crisis. Cutting off or slowing child care funding will have disastrous impacts for parents, children, and the labor force; it only takes one day without child care to lose your job.

Additionally, [reporting](#) from Ohio, Idaho, Massachusetts, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Washington, Maine, and [California](#) make clear that right-wing influencers are engaging in a harassment campaign targeting child care entities run by people of Somali descent. These "influencers" are showing up to and calling child care programs to try to interview employees and express suspicions of fraud. Children's safety is being undermined by the reckless politicization of child care and the replacement of professional oversight with armed agents using intimidation and force.

The administration's actions must be investigated and stopped because they are part of a deliberate, politically-motivated campaign to spread disinformation rather than serious or responsible oversight. The administration elevated a single YouTube provocateur with a [track record of disinformation](#) over state investigators, auditors, and licensing professionals and then acted on that misinformation by freezing federal funds without evidence, due process, or a new investigation. This represents a dangerous erosion of evidence-based governance and signals an intentional choice to privilege partisan ideology and racial scapegoating over facts and what is best for children.

Instead of offering real solutions to address the affordability crisis, the administration is leaning on a fabricated fraud narrative to endanger the lives of caregivers and make the lives of working families even more expensive. Families, early educators, organizers, and advocates across the country have been [clear about what we need to fix the child care crisis](#): robust and permanent funding that ensures care for every single child, at no cost to families *and* good wages and benefits for child care providers of all types, with a pathway to unionizing for those who want to.

The welfare of our children is a nonpartisan issue; children need care no matter whether they live in a ‘red’ or a ‘blue’ state. Thank you for taking swift oversight action to protect children, families, and child care providers.

Sincerely,

Alabama Senator Linda Coleman-Madison

Alabama Senator Vivian Davis Figures

Alabama Senator Bobby Singleton

Alabama Senator Robert Stewart

Alabama Representative Napoleon Bracy Jr.

Alabama Representative Adline C. Clarke

Alabama Representative Anthony Daniels

Alabama Representative Barbara Drummond

Alabama Representative Jeremy A. Gray

Alabama Representative Laura Hall

Alabama Representative Rolanda Hollis

Alabama Representative Thomas E. Jackson

Alabama Representative Kelvin Lawrence

Alabama Representative Patrice McClammy

Alabama Representative Patrick Sellers

Alaska Senator Elvi Gray-Jackson

Alaska Senator Scott Kawasaki

Alaska Senator Löki Gale Tobin

Arizona Senator Eva Diaz

Arizona Senator Lauren Kuby

Arizona House Assistant Minority Leader Nancy Gutierrez

Arizona Representative Stephanie Stahl Hamilton

Arkansas Senator Greg Leding

Arkansas Representative Denise Ennett

Arkansas Representative Denise Garner

Arkansas Representative Diana Gonzales Worthen

Arkansas Representative Ashley Hudson

Arkansas Representative Tippi McCullough

Arkansas Representative Joy Springer

Arkansas Representative David Whitaker

California Senator Caroline Menjivar
California Assemblymember Mia Bonta
California Assemblymember Sade Elhawary

Colorado Senator Matt Ball
Colorado Senator Cathy Kipp
Colorado Senator Janice Marchman
Colorado Senator Mike Weissman
Colorado Representative Sheila Lieder
Colorado Representative Elizabeth Velasco

Connecticut Representative Aundré Bumgardner
Connecticut Representative Kate Farrar
Connecticut Representative Sarah Keitt
Connecticut Representative Nick Menapace

Delaware Senator Daniel Cruce
Delaware Senator Trey Paradee
Delaware Senator David P. Sokola

Florida Senator Carlos Guillermo Smith
Florida Representative Anna V. Eskamani, PhD
Florida Representative Rita Harris
Florida Representative Angie Nixon

Georgia Senator Tonya Anderson
Georgia Senator Kim Jackson
Georgia Representative Lisa Campbell
Georgia Representative Lydia Glaize
Georgia Representative Sheila Jones
Georgia Representative Marvin Lim
Georgia Representative Kim Schofield

Hawaii Representative Della Au Belatti
Hawaii Representative Trish La Chica
Hawaii Representative Amy Perruso

Idaho Senator Melissa Wintrow
Idaho Representative Ilana Rubel

Illinois Senator Graciela Guzman
Illinois Senator Celina Villanueva

Illinois Representative Diane Blair Sherlock
Illinois Representative Mary Beth Canty
Illinois Representative Kelly Cassidy
Illinois Representative Sharon Chung
Illinois Representative Lisa Davis
Illinois Representative Margaret DeLaRosa
Illinois Representative Marti Deuter
Illinois Representative Nicolle Grasse
Illinois Representative Will Guzzardi
Illinois Representative Norma Hernandez
Illinois Representative Maura Hirschauer
Illinois Representative Theresa Mah
Illinois Representative Joyce Mason
Illinois Representative Michelle Mussman

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Indiana Representative John L. Bartlett
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Indiana Representative Kyle Miller
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Kansas Representative Suzanne Wikle

Kentucky Representative Nima Kulkarni

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Louisiana Representative Aimee Adatto Freeman
Louisiana Representative Delisha Boyd
Louisiana Representative Ed Larvadain III
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Maine Representative Rafael L. Macias

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Maryland Delegate Sheila Ruth
Maryland Delegate Emily Shetty
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Massachusetts Representative Lindsay N. Sabadosa

Michigan Senator Stephanie Chang
Michigan Representative Laurie Pohutsky
Michigan Representative Natalie Price

Minnesota Senator Rob Kupec
Minnesota Senator Erin Maye Quade
Minnesota Representative Kelly Moller
Minnesota Representative Dave Pinto
Minnesota Representative Andy Smith

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Missouri Senator Barbara Anne Washington
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Montana Senator Jacinda Morigeau
Montana Senator Andrea Olsen, JD

Nebraska Senator Megan Hunt

Nevada Assemblymember Cecelia González
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New York Assemblymember Jo Anne Simon, Esq.

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North Carolina Senator Natalie Murdock
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Oklahoma Senator Carri Hicks
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Rhode Island Representative Rebecca Kislak
Rhode Island Representative Brandon Potter
Rhode Island Representative June Speakman
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South Dakota Representative Eric Emery
South Dakota House Minority Leader Erin Healy
South Dakota Representative Erik Muckey
South Dakota Representative Nicole Uhre-Balk
South Dakota Representative Kadyn Wittman

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Tennessee Representative John Ray Clemmons
Tennessee Representative Gloria Johnson

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Texas Representative John Bryant
Texas Representative John Bucy III
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Texas Representative Lulu Flores
Texas Representative Josey Garcia
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Texas Representative Vikki Goodwin
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Texas Representative Donna Howard
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Vermont Representative Kate Logan

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Virginia Delegate Elizabeth Bennett-Parker
Virginia Delegate Irene Shin

Washington Representative Mia Su-Ling Gregerson

West Virginia Delegate Evan Hansen
West Virginia Delegate Kayla Young

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Wisconsin Senator Melissa Ratcliff
Wisconsin Senator Kelda Roys
Wisconsin Senator Mark Spreitzer
Wisconsin Representative Margaret Arney
Wisconsin Representative Jodi Emerson
Wisconsin Representative Jenna Jacobson
Wisconsin Representative Alex Joers
Wisconsin Representative Vincent Miresse
Wisconsin Representative Amaad Rivera-Wagner
Wisconsin Representative Christine Sinicki
Wisconsin Representative Lee Snodgrass
Wisconsin Representative Lisa Subeck
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Wyoming Representative Karlee R. Provenza
Wyoming Representative Mike Yin