

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

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California Assemblymember Sade Elhawary

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Colorado Senator Cathy Kipp  
Colorado Senator Janice Marchman  
Colorado Senator Mike Weissman  
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Colorado Representative Elizabeth Velasco

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

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Delaware Senator Trey Paradee  
Delaware Senator David P. Sokola

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Florida Representative Rita Harris  
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Georgia Representative Sheila Jones  
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Hawaii Representative Trish La Chica  
Hawaii Representative Amy Perruso

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