



STATE OF HAWAI'I
KA MOKU 'ĀINA O HAWAI'I

DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
KA 'OIHANA O KA LOIO KUHINA

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**ATTORNEY GENERAL LOPEZ LEADS MULTISTATE COALITION
SUING TRUMP ADMINISTRATION TO STOP DISMANTLING OF U.S.
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND PROTECT STUDENTS**

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HONOLULU – Attorney General Anne Lopez today led a coalition of 21 attorneys general in [suing](#) the Trump administration to stop the dismantling of the U.S. Department of Education. On March 11, the Trump administration announced that the U.S. Department of Education would be firing approximately 50 percent of its workforce as part of its goal of a “total shutdown” of the department. Attorney General Lopez and the coalition today filed a lawsuit seeking to stop the targeted destruction of this critical federal agency that ensures tens of millions of students receive a quality education and critical resources.

“Neither a president nor his administration can abolish or render useless a department of the United States on a whim. Students in Hawai'i—from K-12 to the University of Hawai'i—rely upon the U.S. Department of Education, its programs and its public servants because they are supported by federal laws passed by Congress,” said Attorney General Lopez. “There is no higher calling in government than to fight for a better future for our children. My department will proudly fight for that future, including for federal support for low-income children and students with disabilities and for combatting discrimination in education.”

“The U.S. Department of Education plays a critical role in ensuring that students—especially those with the greatest needs—have access to the resources and opportunities they deserve. Federal education dollars support essential services in our public schools, including special education and school meal programs, and provide salaries for more than 1,100 of our dedicated full-time educators and staff,” said Hawai‘i Department of Education Superintendent Keith T. Hayashi. “Any effort to dismantle this agency threatens not only these vital programs but also the stability of our entire public education system. We appreciate the leadership of Attorney General Lopez in standing up for students, families and educators, and we remain committed to advocating for the resources necessary to best support our students.”

“The proposed elimination of 50% of U.S. Department of Education employees raises serious concerns about the future of critical student services and programs that support educational access,” said University of Hawai‘i President Wendy Hensel. “While the full impact on our university system is still unknown, we anticipate significant disruptions if these reductions move forward as planned. Currently, more than 270 positions across our 10-campus system are funded through U.S. Department of Education resources. These employees and the programs they administer play a crucial role in supporting our students—particularly through initiatives such as Title III, which strengthens UH’s capacity to serve Native Hawaiian students, and Title VII, which upholds essential protections against discrimination. Any reduction in these areas would not only affect our institution but also diminish opportunities for the many communities we serve.”

Solicitor General Kaliko‘onālani Fernandes and Special Assistant to the Attorney General Dave Day jointly stated: “We are all molded by the education we receive as children and young adults. The Department of the Attorney General will challenge all unlawful attempts to deprive the next generation of educational opportunities and privileges promised to them by the laws of this nation.” Hawai‘i is represented in this litigation by Solicitor General Fernandes, Special Assistant to the Attorney General Day, and Deputy Solicitor General Ewan Rayner.

The U.S. Department of Education’s programs serve nearly 18,200 school districts and over 50 million K-12 students attending roughly 98,000 public schools and 32,000 private schools throughout the country. Its higher education programs provide services and support to more than 12 million postsecondary students annually. Students with disabilities and students from low-income families are some of the primary beneficiaries of U.S. Department of Education services and funding. U.S. Department of Education funds for special education include support for assistive technology for students with disabilities, teacher salaries and benefits, transportation to help children receive the

services and programming they need, physical therapy and speech therapy services, and social workers to help manage students' educational experience. The U.S. Department of Education also supports students in rural communities by offering programs designed to help rural school districts that often lack the personnel and resources needed to compete for competitive grants.

As Attorney General Lopez and the coalition assert in the lawsuit, dismantling the U.S. Department of Education will have devastating effects for states like Hawai'i. The administration's lay-off is so massive that the U.S. Department of Education will be incapacitated and unable to perform essential functions. As the lawsuit asserts, the administration's actions will deprive students with special needs of critical resources and support. They will gut U.S. Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights, which protects students from discrimination and sexual assault. They would additionally hamstring the processing of financial aid, raising costs for college and university students who will have a harder time accessing loans, Pell Grants, and work study programs.

With this lawsuit, Attorney General Lopez and the coalition are seeking a court order to stop the administration's policies to dismantle the U.S. Department of Education by drastically cutting its workforce and programs. Attorney General Lopez and the coalition argue that the administration's actions to dismantle the U.S. Department of Education are illegal and unconstitutional. The department is an executive agency authorized by Congress, with numerous different laws creating its various programs and funding streams. The coalition's lawsuit asserts that the Executive Branch does not have the legal authority to unilaterally incapacitate or dismantle it without an act of Congress.

This lawsuit is led by Attorney General Lopez and the attorneys general of California, Massachusetts, and New York. Joining the lawsuit are the attorneys general of Arizona, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Illinois, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, New Jersey, Oregon, Rhode Island, Washington, Wisconsin, Vermont and the District of Columbia.

A link to the virtual press conference Attorney General Lopez held today with California Attorney General Rob Bonta, Massachusetts Attorney General Andrea Joy Campbell, and New York Attorney General Letitia James can be found [here](#).

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