



STATE OF HAWAII
KA MOKU 'ĀINA O HAWAII

DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
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ATTORNEY GENERAL LOPEZ LEADS FIGHT TO STOP TRUMP FROM SHUTTING DOWN THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

AG Lopez Leads Coalition Seeking Preliminary Injunction to Block Mass Layoffs and the Elimination of Core Services at the Department of Education

News Release 2025-44

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 24, 2025

HONOLULU – Attorney General Lopez today led a coalition of 20 other attorneys general in filing a [motion for a preliminary injunction](#) as part of its lawsuit to stop the dismantling of the Department of Education (ED).

On March 13, Attorney General Lopez and the coalition filed the lawsuit after the Trump administration announced plans to eliminate 50 percent of ED's workforce. Following a March 20 Executive Order directing the closure of ED and President Trump's March 21 announcement that, in addition to implementing layoffs, the ED must "immediately" transfer student loan management and special education services outside of ED, Attorney General Lopez and the coalition are seeking a court order to immediately stop the mass layoffs and transfer of services.

"The Department of Education is essential, and it cannot be eliminated or incapacitated by the Trump administration without violating federal law," said Attorney General Lopez. "The 50% cut to the department's workforce and transfer of department functions to

other agencies causes grave harm to our state and our students. We are asking the court to step in to halt the department's destruction."

"Closing the U.S. Department of Education is a potentially catastrophic blow to students, especially those who rely on federal aid and support services to access higher education. At the University of Hawai'i, this decision threatens over 100 critical programs and hundreds of jobs across our campuses. We strongly support this legal challenge to defend the future of public education and the communities we serve," said University of Hawai'i President Wendy Hensel.

"The move to dismantle the U.S. Department of Education threatens critical programs that directly support our students, including those with disabilities, English learners, students experiencing unstable housing, and those in our highest-need schools," said Hawai'i Department of Education Superintendent Keith T. Hayashi. "In addition to funding, we rely on the department's guidance to ensure compliance, plan for the school year, and sustain essential services across the state. Even with assurances that core programs will continue, a shift of this magnitude risks serious disruptions. We appreciate Attorney General Lopez's leadership in standing up for the stability our schools depend on, and we remain committed to working with our partners to protect educational opportunities for all students."

As Attorney General Lopez and the coalition assert, the Trump administration's attacks on ED have already had serious consequences for families and students throughout the country. Mass layoffs of ED staff have led to the closure of ED's Office for Civil Rights locations throughout the country. Critical funding for state school systems has also been delayed. As the attorneys general argue, states rely on billions of dollars every year in funding for elementary and secondary education, services for children with disabilities, vocational education, adult education, and other crucial services. All of these programs will be severely disrupted if the administration's incapacitation of ED is not stopped.

Attorney General Lopez and the coalition argue in their lawsuit and motion for a preliminary injunction that the Trump administration's attacks on ED are illegal and unconstitutional. ED is an executive agency authorized by Congress, with numerous 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 dismantle it without an act of Congress. In addition, the attorneys general argue that ED's mass layoffs violate the Administrative Procedures Act.

The state of Hawai'i is represented in this litigation by Solicitor General Kaliko'onālani Fernandes, Deputy Solicitors General Ewan Rayner and Caitlyn Carpenter, and Special Assistant to the Attorney General Dave Day.

Joining Attorney General Lopez in filing the lawsuit and today's motion are the attorneys general of Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Illinois, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont, Washington, Wisconsin and the District of Columbia.

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