



STATE OF HAWAII
KA MOKU 'ĀINA O HAWAII

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**STATE OF HAWAII WINS COURT ORDER STOPPING THE
DISMANTLING OF THE FEDERAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 22, 2025

HONOLULU – The state of Hawai'i today won [a court order](#) stopping the Trump administration's attempts to dismantle the U.S. Department of Education (ED).

On March 13, Attorney General Anne Lopez led a coalition of 20 other attorneys general in suing the administration after it announced plans to eliminate 50 percent of ED's workforce. Following a March 20 executive order directing the closure of ED and the administration's March 21 announcement that, in addition to implementing layoffs, ED must "immediately" transfer student loan management and special education services outside of the department, Attorney General Lopez and the coalition sought a preliminary injunction to immediately stop the mass layoffs and transfer of services.

Today, the U.S. District Court for the District of Massachusetts granted the preliminary injunction, halting the administration's policies that would dismantle ED, and ordering all employees who were fired as part of the layoffs to be reinstated.

"We are pleased with Judge Joun's decision, which makes clear that the dismantling of ED is completely illegal," said Attorney General Lopez. "The administration's assault on

education is an assault on the children of Hawai'i and the future of our state. This is a fight we are proud to take on."

Attorney General Lopez and the coalition argued in their lawsuit and motion for a preliminary injunction that the federal administration's attacks on the department 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, Attorney General Lopez and the coalition argue that ED's mass layoffs violate the Administrative Procedure Act.

The dismantling of the ED would directly impact the University of Hawai'i (UH) and the Hawai'i Department of Education (HIDOE). UH, for example, depends on multiple student aid loan programs, administered through the federal ED, that provide critical financial support to thousands of UH students annually. Delays and cuts to federally administered student aid programs directly affect UH's student population and increase the financial strain on thousands of families already struggling to afford college.

"Today's ruling is a critical victory for students and for the future of public higher education," said University of Hawai'i President Wendy Hensel. "The U.S. Department of Education plays an essential role in expanding access to college, supporting low- and middle-income students through Pell Grants and student loans, and providing the data and infrastructure that drive smart, evidence-based policies. Currently at UH, more than 100 programs rely on ED support — including initiatives that promote workforce readiness, college access initiatives like GEAR UP and TRIO. We are grateful for the amazing work of our Attorney General and her team leading on this case, and for the court's recognition of the profound impacts of these policy decisions."

HIDOE relies on federal assistance with the administration of several multimillion dollar grants that fund early intervention services for youth and their families, increased access to public education for homeless youth, educational services for children from low-income families, and the development of school robotics and computer science programs, to name a few.

"Today's decision is essential to preserving the U.S. Department of Education's ability to provide the critical funding, policy guidance, and civil rights protections that support our students and schools," said Hawai'i State Department of Education Superintendent Keith Hayashi. "We are reassured knowing that federal funding and foundational programs that directly benefit Hawai'i's public school students — such as Title I, Special Education (IDEA), and Career and Technical Education (CTE) — will remain stable.

Mahalo to Governor Green and Attorney General Lopez for their steadfast commitment and advocacy in securing the resources and protections our students and educators depend on.”

The state of Hawai‘i is represented in this case, *New York, et al. v. McMahon, et al.*, by Solicitor General Kaliko‘onāalani Fernandes, Deputy Solicitors General Caitlyn Carpenter and Ewan Rayner, and Special Assistant to the Attorney General Dave Day.

This lawsuit is led by Attorney General Lopez and the attorneys general of California, Massachusetts and New York. Joining in the filing 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.

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