



WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

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Joint Press Release from Assembly Education Committee Democrats Representatives Hong, Sheehan, Cruz, & Phelps on Department of Education Layoffs

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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On Tuesday, the United States Department of Education initiated the termination of more than 1,300 employees, cutting its workforce in half and opening the path to a significant overhaul of its operations. This decision follows President Donald Trump’s threat to dissolve the department through an Executive Order, as well as a series of budget cuts imposed by Elon Musk’s Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE). These cuts have already resulted in the [termination](#) of numerous important contracts within the department and the gutting of the Institute of Education Sciences—the independent research arm responsible for collecting and disseminating data on a wide range of education topics.

Representative Francesca Hong (D-Madison), the ranking Democratic member of the Committee, said:

“As Representative for the 76th Assembly District, I cannot stand by while billionaires in Washington gamble with our children’s futures. The essential work and programming that the Department of Education provides is not a luxury—it is a lifeline for students, families, and educators across Wisconsin. The elimination of roughly half of the department’s workforce is undoubtedly going to widen educational disparities, jeopardize crucial student services, and force school districts across our state to make impossible choices.

Representative Angelina Cruz (D-Racine) stated: “Our children deserve every opportunity to succeed, regardless of their race, income, or background. The Department of Education is essential for providing special education services, supporting low-income students, and ensuring access to school meals and after-school programs. Cutting the Department of Education and its workforce to fund tax breaks for the wealthy forces everyday Americans to choose between paying higher taxes or losing vital services that support their children’s future. Donald Trump and Elon Musk are expanding their war on working-class people to children, specifically the 50 million public school students in rural, suburban, and urban communities across this country.”

Representative Christian Phelps (D- Eau Claire) stated: “The mass layoff of half the Department of Education’s workforce is a devastating blow to rural communities. Public schools, especially in our small towns and rural areas, depend on federal support for special education, technical education, agricultural programs and more. With fewer resources and less support, small-town public schools—already operating with severe budget gaps left by the state—will be looking at staff shortages, program cuts, and declining educational opportunities for the students who need them most.”

Representative Joe Sheehan (D-Sheboygan) said: “We have a responsibility to our children to act in the best interests of their future. The Department of Education was predicated on the commitment to assure access to equal educational opportunity for every individual in the nation. To reduce the scope of this commitment is to harm the future of every student who enters into the care of our public schools. Our schools rely on grants from the Department of Education, including Title 1 grants that fund additional academic support including our free and reduced lunch programs and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act funding formula grants that help support our special education programs. This reduction puts these and many other programs in jeopardy, and I am saddened to see this action taken. You must be heard. Please reach out to your local and federal representatives to let them know you are frustrated by this action.”

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