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First 5 California Condemns Executive Order to Dismantle the U.S. Department of Education

*Warns of Devastating Consequences for Early Childhood Education and Public
Schools*

Sacramento, CA — Today, President Donald J. Trump signed an executive order initiating the dismantling of the U.S. Department of Education, fulfilling a key campaign promise to eliminate the agency. First 5 California strongly denounces this executive order, warning that this reckless move will have devastating consequences for early childhood education, children with disabilities, and low-income families.

“This decision puts millions of children and families at risk, particularly those who depend on early learning programs and federal support to access a quality education,” said Jackie Thu-Huong Wong, Executive Director of First 5 California. “By dismantling the Department of Education, the administration is turning its back on America’s most vulnerable children—especially those in low-income communities, children with disabilities, and rural families who rely on federal funding for basic education services.”

The U.S. Department of Education has played a critical role in funding and coordinating early learning programs that prepare children for success in school. The elimination of the department puts programs like [Head Start](#), [Early Head Start](#), and [Title I Preschool](#) at risk, potentially widening achievement gaps for young children before they even enter kindergarten.

The department also ensures protections for children with disabilities through the [Individuals with Disabilities Education Act \(IDEA\)](#). This federal law authorizes grant programs to support special education and early intervention services for children with disabilities. Under IDEA, a series of conditions are attached to the receipt of grant funds, and these conditions provide educational guarantees for children with disabilities

and their families. Before IDEA, many children with disabilities were denied an education altogether. Without federal oversight, states would determine their own levels of support, threatening essential services for millions of families.

The executive order claims to preserve Title I funding for low-income schools and Pell Grants, but it fails to provide a clear plan for how critical programs will continue under state control. Additionally, the federal administration has already cut funding and staff for key education services, including civil rights enforcement and education research.

Despite the administration's claims, a majority of Americans oppose eliminating the Department of Education. According to recent polling by Reuters/Ipsos, 65% of Americans support keeping the department intact, recognizing its role in ensuring equal access to quality education.

First 5 California urges Congress to reject this disastrous plan. Closing the Department of Education requires an act of Congress, and First 5 California calls on lawmakers to stand up for children, families, and educators nationwide.

"Congress must act immediately to stop this dangerous and irresponsible decision," Wong said. "The future of our children depends on it."

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ABOUT FIRST 5 CALIFORNIA:

First 5 California was established in 1998 when voters passed Proposition 10, which taxes tobacco products to fund services for children ages 0 to 5 and their families. First 5 California programs and resources are designed to educate and support teachers, parents, and caregivers in their critical role during a child's first five years – to help California kids receive the best possible start in life and thrive. For more information, please visit www.cafc.ca.gov.