



May 21, 2025

U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative:

On behalf of our 3 million members and the 50 million students they serve, we strongly urge you to VOTE NO on H. Con. Res. 14, the budget reconciliation bill. Votes on this issue WILL BE SCORED in NEA's report card for the 119th Congress.

As a whole, the bill transfers wealth from working families to the ultra-rich—ultimately at the expense of our students. It extends tax breaks created by the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act that overwhelmingly benefit the wealthy, large corporations, and other big businesses. Simultaneously, it shreds the social safety net and swells the national debt by as much as \$5.2 trillion over the next 10 years, according to the nonpartisan Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget.

Working families will find it even harder to make ends meet. The bill slashes support for education, health care, and nutrition aid for students, seniors, people with disabilities, and veterans at a time when prices for food, clothing, and other daily necessities are rising and expected to stay high.

The nature and impact of specific provisions of the bill are discussed below.

#### **Nearly 14 million lose health care coverage**

According to the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office (CBO), nearly 14 million Americans would lose access to health care due to new restrictions on Medicaid eligibility and cuts in Affordable Care Act (ACA) subsidies—8.6 million under Medicaid and 5.1 million under the ACA.

The fourth-largest source of support for K-12 public schools, Medicaid covers over 80 million Americans, including nearly half our students and 1 in 10 education support professionals. To discourage enrollment in the program, the bill would require 80 hours per month of “community engagement” (work, education, job training or volunteering) and bury applicants in an avalanche of paperwork. According to a [recent study](#) by the Commonwealth Fund and George Washington University, up to 5.2 million adults could lose Medicaid coverage in 2026 alone—leading in turn to the loss of nearly half a million jobs.

Rural areas would be hit especially hard. Health care providers are already in short supply, and many hospitals have closed or can no longer afford to provide essential—but unprofitable—services like maternity care. Slashing the number of people covered by Medicaid and the ACA would exacerbate these problems.

#### **SNAP cuts put school meals at risk**

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) helps feed more than 42 million Americans—40 percent are children and 80 percent are households that include a child, older adult, or disabled individual. All across America, millions of students could go hungry due to \$290 billion in cuts and new

restrictions on eligibility for SNAP included in the bill. When families lose eligibility for SNAP, students' access to free school meals is also at risk.

### **Voucher scheme weakens public schools**

The nationwide tax-credit voucher scheme created by the bill would divert \$20 billion to private and religious schools, weakening public education at a time when the administration has cut—and proposed billions more in cuts—in funding for the public schools that educate 9 out of 10 students. Entire communities will suffer, especially in rural areas where 20 percent of our students live and public schools are economic centers.

Individuals could receive a dollar-for-dollar tax credit—far more valuable than the usual deduction for charitable contributions—in exchange for giving money to an intermediary organization, which then funnels the money to private schools as tuition. Individuals who donate stocks instead of money would get an even bigger tax credit representing both the value of the stock and realized gains.

Private schools do not provide the same protections public schools are required to provide by law—Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, Title IX of the Education Amendments Act, and the Americans with Disabilities Act. Special needs students lose important legal rights and protections under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Every time voucher schemes are on state ballots—17 times in total, including three states last November—voters have overwhelmingly rejected them. America cannot afford to fund two education systems, one private and one public. Taxpayer dollars should go to public schools open to all students, not private schools that can pick and choose their students.

### **Higher education becomes even less affordable**

The bill eliminates affordable student loan repayment pathways. According to the Student Borrower Protection Center, a typical family of four with a head of household holding a bachelor's degree would pay \$4,800 more per year than it would under the Saving for Valuable Education (SAVE) plan.

In addition, the bill caps or eliminates programs that provide loans to attend graduate and professional schools, limits financial aid eligibility for students with immigration statuses, and slashes Pell Grants—half of all recipients would get less money, according to CBO. It also imposes new taxes on scholarships, fellowships, and student loan debt, and makes it harder for victims of unscrupulous institutions to escape student loan debt.

It is counterproductive to slash investments in our students—America's future leaders and workforce—yet that is precisely what this bill does.

### **Steep fees limit legal immigration**

The bill imposes steep fees that would turn legal immigration into a luxury only the wealthy can afford—among other things, a \$3,500 sponsorship fee for unaccompanied children and a \$550 fee for each work permit. It would also expand mass detention, including the detention of children and family units in unlicensed and unsafe tent cities.

Ramped-up immigration enforcement is already traumatizing students all across America. Every day, educators at all levels from pre-K to postgraduate encounter students terrified by threats of mass

deportation. They worry that their loved ones will be targeted and their families broken up. Some refuse to leave their homes, even to go to school.

They are right to be afraid. The administration has repeatedly attacked immigrants, failed to provide them with due process, and violated court orders—actions that threaten the checks and balances central to our Constitution and undermine the rule of law that is the foundation of our democracy.

**Extension of the Secure Rural Schools Program**

We appreciate that the bill would also extend the Secure Rural Schools (SRS) program, but oppose doing so at the expense of large cuts in other critical programs. Twenty percent of our students live in rural areas where public schools are economic centers that would be undermined by this bill, as noted above.

For all these reasons, we strongly urge you to VOTE NO on H. Con. Res. 14.

Sincerely,

Kimberly Johnson Trinca  
Director of Government Relations  
National Education Association