

*Administration of Donald J. Trump, 2025*

**Remarks on Signing the Executive Order on Improving Education Outcomes by Empowering Parents, States, and Communities**

*March 20, 2025*

*The President.* Well, thank you very much.

Thank you very much, everyone.

And I'd like to start by saying that our country is doing very well. Things are, as you can see, doing quite well.

Please sit down.

Before we begin, I just want to announce that I signed a proclamation a few moments ago honoring the 250th anniversary of Patrick Henry's famous speech to the Second Virginia Convention in which he declared very well-known, very famous words: "Give me liberty or give me death."

Has anyone heard the phrase? I think most of you have.

And moments ago, I also signed an Executive order to dramatically increase production of critical minerals and rare earths. It's a big thing in this country. And, as you know, we're also signing agreements in various locations to unlock rare earths and minerals and lots of other things all over the world but, in particular, Ukraine. We're doing very well with regard to Ukraine and Russia. And one of the things we are doing is signing a deal very shortly with respect to rare earths with Ukraine, which they have a tremendous value in rare earth, and we appreciate that.

And we spoke yesterday with, as you know, President Putin and President Zelenskyy. And we would love to see that come to an end, and I think we're doing pretty well in that regard. So, hopefully we can save thousands of people a week from dying. That's what it's all about. They're dying so unnecessarily. And I believe we'll get it done. We'll see what happens. But I believe we'll get it done.

Today we take a very historic action that was 45 years in the making. In a few moments, I will sign an Executive order to begin eliminating the Federal Department of Education once and for all.

And it sounds strange, doesn't it? Department of Education, we're going to eliminate it. And everybody knows it's right. And the Democrats know it's right, and I hope they're going to be voting for it, because, ultimately, it may come before them. But everybody knows it's right, and we have to get our children educated.

We're not doing well with the world of education in this country, and we haven't for a long time.

And we're pleased to be joined today by the woman who I chose because she's an extraordinary person, and hopefully, she will be our last Secretary of Education—*[laughter]*—Linda McMahon. Linda. Thank you. Thank you very much.

That's another interesting statement. These are very—that's an interesting opening, right? *[Laughter]*

But it's true. And we—people—you know, it's been amazing how popular this has been. I tell people that this is what I'm doing today, and they say, "Oh, that's—it's about time." Everybody says it. Republicans and Democrats have said it. And they're all saying it.

Also with us are some terrific people. Governors Greg Abbott. Greg, thank you very much. Governor Ron DeSantis. Thank you very much, Ron. Mike Braun. Congratulations on your victory, Mike. That was a big one. Mike DeWine. Thank you very much, Mike.

Jeff Landry. Jeff. Thank you very much, Jeff. Bill Lee, thank you. Governors. All Governors. Brad Little. Brad, thank you very much. Where are you, Brad? Hi, Brad. Jim Pillen. Thank you very much, Jim. And Kim Reynolds.

These are all people very interested in education. And I even see Dan Patrick over there—my friend Dan Patrick.

We're joined also by Representatives Tim Walberg and Virginia Foxx, Rick Allen, Michael Rulli, and again, Dan Patrick. Thank you very much, Dan. You've been a great friend of ours.

And State Attorneys General Ken Paxton. Ken, I see you there. Andrew Bailey. Andrew. What a job you've done, Andrew. What—you have some good cases going. You've done a great job. Thank you very much.

And cofounder of Moms for Liberty, Tiffany Justice. She's been a hard worker. Thank you. Thank you very—thank you, Tiffany.

When President Carter created the Federal Education Department in 1979, it was opposed by members of his own Cabinet, as well as the American Federation of Teachers, the New York Times editorial board, and the famed Democrat Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan.

History has proven them right, absolutely right. After 45 years, the United States spends more money on education by far than any other country and spends, likewise, by far, more money per pupil than any country. And it's not even close. But yet, we rank near the bottom of the list in terms of success.

It's an amazing stat that's—those are two stats you don't want: the most money spent per pupil, and you're at the bottom of the list. And that's where we are, like it or not, and we've been there for a long time.

Seventy percent of eighth graders are not proficient in either reading or in math. Seventy percent. Forty percent of fourth graders lack even basic reading skills. Can't read. Students in our public elementary and middle schools score worse in reading today than when the department opened by a lot.

In Baltimore, 40 percent of the high schools have zero students who can do basic mathematics—not even the very simplest of mathematics. I said, "Give me your definition of basic," and they're talking about, like, adding a few numbers together.

Despite these breathtaking failures, the department's discretionary budget has exploded by 600 percent in a very short period of time, and it employs bureaucrats in buildings all over Washington, DC. And as a former real estate person, I will tell you, I ride through the streets of Washington, and it says, "Department of Education, Department of Education." I said, "How do you fill those buildings?" It's crazy what's happened over the years.

I'm pleased to report that after offering these Federal employees two generous buyout options—and they were very generous—and they're good people—but they were very generous—my administration has initiated a reduction in force, and we're already cutting numbers that were really surprising to a lot that we were able to do it so successfully. And we've cut the number of bureaucrats in half. Fifty percent have taken offers, which is great. Thank you.

Under the action I am taking today, a small handful of Democrats and others that we have employed for a long time—and there are some Republicans, but not too many, I have to be honest with you—but the department's useful functions and—such as—and they're in charge of them—

Pell grants, title I funding, resources for children with disabilities and special needs will be preserved. Fully preserved. They're all going to be.

So, if you look at the Pell grants—supposed to be a very good program—title I funding, and resources for children with special disabilities and special needs, they're going to be preserved in full and redistributed to various other agencies and departments that will take very good care of them. And that's very important to Linda, I know, and it's very important to all of us.

But beyond these core necessities, my administration will take all lawful steps to shut down the department. We're going to shut it down and shut it down as quickly as possible. It's doing us no good. We want to return our students to the States where just some of the Governors here are so happy about this. They want education to come back to them, to come back to the States, and they're going to do a phenomenal job.

You know, if you look: Denmark, Norway, Sweden—I have to tell you—I give them a lot of credit. China is top 10, and so we can't now say that bigness is making it impossible to educate, because China is very big. But you have countries that do a very good job in education. And I really believe, like some of the Governors here today from States that run very, very well, including a big State like Texas—but States that run very well are going to have education that will be as good as Norway, Denmark, Sweden, and those top—Finland—those top countries that do so well with education. I think they'll have—they'll do every bit as well.

And what do you think about that, Governor? Do you agree? Huh? I think so. Ron, do you agree? I think so. Florida. Iowa. That's right. I really believe that. They'll be as good as any of them.

And then you'll have some laggards, and we'll work with them. And we can all tell you who the laggards will be right now, probably, but let's not get into that. *[Laughter]*

But we'll work with them, and we're going to make them—they'll do a job. I think they'll do a job.

And they'll go to sections of the State. For instance, New York, you'll have a Manhattan, and you'll have a Suffolk County, and you'll have Nassau County and you'll have Westchester County. You'll do four or five or six of them. You have Upstate New York. And those counties, I think, are going to do very well. And I think, ultimately, Manhattan should do very well. But we'll break it down into sections, and I think it will be really, really good. And they're going to be probably the tougher ones, but I think they have a chance to do really well.

But we're going to be returning education, very simply, back to the States, where it belongs. And this is a very popular thing to do, but much more importantly, it's a commonsense thing to do, and it's going to work. Absolutely, it's going to work.

And I can tell you, from dealing with the Governors and others in the State, they want it so badly. They want to take their children back and really teach their children individually.

Probably, the cost will be half, and the education will be maybe many, many times better. So we look forward to this.

I want to just make one little personal statement. Teachers, to me, are among the most important people in this country, and we're going to take care of our teachers. And I don't care if they're in the union or not in the union. That doesn't matter.

But we're going to take care of our teachers, and I believe the States will take, actually, better care of them than they are taken care of right now. They'll work all sorts of systems and even merit systems. Those great teachers are going to be maybe a little bit better rewarded, and maybe that's the way it should be, but the States are going to make that decision.

But we're going to love and cherish our teachers, along with our children, and they're going to work with the parents, and they're going to work with everybody else. And it's going to be an amazing thing to watch, and it's really going to be something special.

And, Linda, you're presiding over something that's so important, and you're going to do a fantastic job, just like you have your whole life. I knew your whole life—I've been watching you; I've been watching you for a long time. She's had nothing but success.

So it's tremendous to have you. And hopefully, you won't be there too long. [*Laughter*] But we're going to find something else for you, Linda. Okay?

So this will conclude what we are talking about with respect to our most cherished group of people, and that's our children. We want to have our children well educated, and we want them to love going to school.

We have examples of it. Look at those beautiful, bright-eyed faces. Those—they are so smart. They're so smart.

And with that, I am going to come down and we're going to sign a very important document, and we're going to be on our way.

People have wanted to do this for many, many years, for many, many decades. And I don't know—no President ever got around to doing it, but I'm getting around to doing it.

So thank you very much.

[*At this point, the President addressed the students seated in desks near the signing table.*]

Hello, everyone. Good-looking people here. Nice pen. Should I do this?

*Student.* Yes.

*The President.* Should I do it?

[*The students nodded.*]

Yes? Okay. I think so.

We have pens for you too. Special pens. I'll take this one out. I had one that was very lucky. I signed another document that turned out to be very good for the country. And I said, "Let's use that same pen." I don't know. Is anybody superstitious? Ron, are you superstitious? Let's use that same pen.

[*The President signed the Executive order.*]

Okay. Time to get up.

Linda, come on up here. Can you come up please? Come on up here, Linda. Can you come up just to say—come on up.

*Secretary of Education Linda E. McMahon.* Yes.

*The President.* That's great. It's very important. You're a big factor here. Good luck.

*Secretary McMahon.* Thank you, sir.

*The President.* Good luck, Linda.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you, Linda. Good luck.

Thank you, everybody, very much. Good luck. We'll see you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:22 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia; President Volodymyr Zelenskyy of Ukraine; Gov. Gregory W. Abbott, Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick, and State Attorney General W. Kenneth Paxton, Jr., of Texas; Gov. Ronald D. DeSantis of Florida; Gov. Michael K. Braun of Indiana; Gov. R. Michael DeWine of Ohio; Gov. Jeffery M. Landry of Louisiana; Gov. William B. Lee of Tennessee; Gov. Bradley J. Little of Idaho; Gov. James D. Pillen of Nebraska; Gov. Kimberly K. Reynolds of Iowa; and State Attorney General Andrew Bailey of Missouri. He also referred to Proclamation 10906 and Executive Order 14241. The transcript was released by the Office of Communications on March 21.

*Categories:* Addresses and Remarks : Education outcomes, improvement efforts through empowering parents, States, and communities, signing the Executive order.

*Locations:* Washington, DC.

*Names:* Abbott, Gregory W.; Allen, Rick W.; Bailey, Andrew; Braun, Michael K.; DeSantis, Ronald D.; DeWine, R. Michael; Foxx, Virginia A.; Justice, Tiffany; Landry, Jeffery M.; Lee, William B.; Little, Bradley J.; McMahon, Linda E.; Patrick, Dan; Paxton, W. Kenneth, Jr.; Pillen, James D.; Putin, Vladimir Vladimirovich; Reynolds, Kimberly K.; Rulli, Michael A.; Walberg, Tim; Zelenskyy, Volodymyr.

*Subjects:* Department of Education, proposed closure; Education, global competitiveness; Federal workforce, reduction efforts; Florida, Governor; Idaho, Governor; Indiana, Governor; Iowa, Governor; Louisiana, Governor; Mineral production, expansion efforts; Nebraska, Governor; Nutrition assistance; Ohio, Governor; Patrick Henry "Give Me Liberty, or Give Me Death!" speech, 250th anniversary; Pell grants; Russia, conflict in Ukraine; Russia, President; Secretary of Education; Special education and support services; Teachers; Tennessee, Governor; Texas, Governor; Texas, Lieutenant Governor; Ukraine, President; Ukraine, Russian invasion and airstrikes.

*DCPD Number:* DCPD202500377.