

They said: You can either go home—and on Wednesday there is a burn clinic where they can look at his hand for free—or we can see if the VCU Health center can admit him today. I said: Well, he is going to get admitted today because I knew I had health insurance, and whatever that bill was going to be, I didn't have to worry about it.

If I didn't have health insurance, I would have been forced to wait until Wednesday to go to the clinic, and his hand probably would have been infected.

After a 3-hour ambulance ride, a week in the burn unit, and all the medication, the bill was \$15,000. In the blink of an eye, my son's injury cost \$15,000. However, I was lucky because I had health insurance, so I only had to pay \$1,000. I was lucky I had the ability to pay that.

At the time, we were trying to figure out should Virginia expand Medicaid to help people who can't afford health insurance get it. We were able to expand it on a bipartisan basis because in our rural areas, they understood Medicaid expansion was critical to keeping their hospitals open. Over 300,000 Virginians got health insurance because of that.

Now, those 300,000 Virginians face the prospect of losing their health insurance because of actions Congress took in July with the largest Medicaid cut in American history. In our rural areas, six hospitals in Virginia are at risk of closing because of those Medicaid cuts, one in my district that is a healthcare safety net. The closest hospital if they close is over an hour away.

We also created our own State-based healthcare exchange, and 573,000 Virginians signed up. Many of them now face the prospect they won't be able to afford their premiums when their tax credits expire in 17 days.

This is all in the context of folks seeing their housing costs increase, whether it is rent or mortgage, their energy bills increase, childcare increase. A lot of folks are facing the prospect that they cannot pay their rent and their health insurance, so they are playing the lottery, figuratively: The lottery that they won't get sick or the lottery they won't get injured. When they do, whether they are insured or not, they are showing up at the hospital, and the rest of us will pay the cost.

□ 1940

Mr. Speaker, as we enter the holiday season, as a preacher's kid, I have been thinking a lot about Matthew 25:31-40, where Jesus said: "Come, you who are blessed by my Father." He said when He enters into his kingdom, all the nations will come, and He will say: "Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and

you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me."

"Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?' When did we do this? And He said: 'Whatever you did for the least of these, you did for Me.'"

Mr. Speaker, I came to Congress looking to do for the least of these as well as every American, but Congress' priorities this year have not been that.

Congress bent over backward, congressional Republicans specifically, bent over backward to provide permanent tax breaks for people who make over \$500,000 a year, but if you make \$64,000 a year, or a family of four that makes \$129,000 a year, you are just expected to absorb health insurance premiums that double or triple.

If you make \$21,597 a year, or a family of four who makes \$44,000 to \$45,000 a year, you are supposed to absorb your healthcare costs if you lose access to Medicaid. That is upside down, and what we are saying is to the least of these, you are on your own. They deserve better.

We have 4 days to try to prevent millions of Americans from losing access to health insurance. Are we going to do it? Time will tell. I still have hope, but we will see.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

DISMANTLING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

(Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2025, Mrs. HAYES of Connecticut was recognized for 30 minutes.)

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. HAYES. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the subject of the Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Connecticut?

There was no objection.

Mrs. HAYES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today as a member of the Committee on Education and Workforce, a teacher, and a parent to lead this Special Order hour on the systemic dismantling of the Department of Education.

From the beginning, the Trump administration and Secretary Linda McMahon have been ruthless in attacking the Department that is dedicated to ensuring equal access to quality education, promoting student achievement, preparing students for global competitiveness, administering Federal funds, enforcing civil rights, collecting data, conducting research, and supporting educational programs from early childhood to higher education.

On March 11, the Department of Education initiated a reduction in force affecting nearly 50 percent of its workforce. Only 2,200 employees of the 4,000 employees that used to work at the Department remain to protect the civil rights of students, to support students from low-income backgrounds, to develop and prepare educators, and to provide resources for English language learners.

President Trump also signed an executive order directing the Secretary of Education to facilitate the closure of the Department of Education. This action by the President is illegal.

The Department of Education was created by an act of Congress, and only Congress has the authority to close that agency or any other Federal agency it creates. Yet, the executive order was one of many attacks by the President to collapse Federal agencies and end necessary services to the American people.

Last month, the Department of Education announced six new interagency agreements to shift the day-to-day functions to four other agencies. This, I have to say, is one of the most devastating actions yet.

This agreement sends the American Indian and Tribal colleges to the Department of the Interior. It sends TRIO programs to the Department of Labor. It sends the Child Care Access Means Parents in School program to the Department of Health and Human Services and International Education and Foreign Language Studies to the Department of State. These Departments do not have the expertise or appropriate staff to administer these programs, and our students will eventually suffer.

Since its creation in 1979, the Department of Education has been committed to ensuring high-quality education for the 49 million children who attend public schools across the country.

The Department of Education also collects and publishes data on student enrollment, school staffing, and crime in schools, and distributes Federal funds to support programs for 7.5 million students with special needs. We haven't heard any examples or any information on how these programs will run when being administered across several different agencies.

When my Republican colleagues say they want to dismantle the Department, what they are really saying is they want to eliminate the sole Federal agency that protects the civil rights of students, the sole Federal agency that supports students from low-income backgrounds and develops and prepares educators. For postsecondary students, the Department administers Pell grants and \$1.6 million in Federal student aid programs to support those trying to afford college.

This Department has long been a target of Republican lawmakers who make the false claims about the role of the Department of Education. I know with fidelity that the Department of

Education does not handle school curriculum, instruction, or instructional materials. Those decisions have been and will remain at the local level. What the Department does is support title I districts and low-income communities that rely on Federal funding.

Abolishing the Department of Education would place the burden for continuing vital services on States and local communities that would either be forced to cut programs or raise their local taxes.

Every student deserves access to a free and appropriate public education. As a teacher serving in Congress, this issue is deeply personal to me. I introduced the Department of Education Protection Act to shield the Department of Education from efforts by the Trump administration to dismantle the agency without the consent of Congress. Specifically, my legislation would prohibit the use of appropriated funds to decentralize, reduce staffing levels, or alter the responsibilities, structure, authority, or functionality of the Department of Education.

If this administration wants to make a proposal that the Department of Education should be abolished, they must come before Congress and lay out a plan for how that looks, how it will work, and how it will impact students and families.

I will continue to advocate for the Department of Education to work to find commonsense solutions to address education issues, not just tear it down with no plan to support students.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Virginia (Ms. McCLELLAN).

□ 1950

Ms. McCLELLAN. Mr. Speaker, education is personal to my family. In the 1880s, my great-grandfather founded a school in a rural community because the State of Alabama did not think it important to educate Black children. As he explained in his autobiography, he wanted to teach the children, whose parents and grandparents had been enslaved on the plantations nearby, to be of better service to themselves, to their employers, and to the community in which they lived.

In the 1930s, my father and his sisters attended that school because the State of Tennessee didn't provide a good education to Black children. Like his father and grandfather, my dad became an educator himself, ultimately teaching the next generation of educators at Virginia State University, which I now represent in Congress.

In the 1950s, my mother moved away from her hometown because the State of Mississippi did not provide a good education to Black children. The only school that did was run by the Catholic church but only to the eighth grade. The third youngest of 14 children, she wanted more than the domestic and laborer jobs available to her grandparents, her parents, her brothers, and her sisters.

She moved to go to high school, ultimately becoming an educator herself. She ran the federally funded TRIO Programs at Virginia State, which are run by the Department of Education, to ensure that children like her had the support they needed to go to and graduate college.

Mr. Speaker, my parents saw firsthand how important a good education was to individual opportunity and a thriving and healthy economy, community, and democracy. They dedicated their lives to ensuring not only that their children but every child had a good education.

Not every child is so lucky because the legacy of over 300 years of slavery and Jim Crow, massive resistance, and chronic underfunding has created too many obstacles to the ability of States and local governments to give every child an opportunity for a good education.

For the past 20 years, first as a State legislator and now in Congress, I have worked to ensure every child in Virginia gets a good education. As a mother of two children in public schools, even with bipartisan and Herculean effort, I see every day that there are still gaps across the country. The Department of Education was created to fill those gaps.

The Department of Education protects students' civil rights, particularly those with disabilities. It provides support to attract, train, and retain the best and brightest teachers, school administrators, support personnel, counselors, and mental health professionals.

The Department of Education measures and tracks academic progress across the country and helps those school divisions that lag behind address areas of concern. It manages student loan and grant programs that ensure children without financial means to go college can do so without incurring more debt than they can ever pay off.

Without the Department of Education, State and local officials in Virginia and across the country are worried that they do not have the funding or the staff to handle the workload, especially in the area of special education, especially in our rural areas.

The block grant funding that the Trump administration keeps promising comes with little accountability, making it unclear whether those Federal funds will ever reach the students that need them the most.

Education lays the foundation for a strong future, as well as a thriving, healthy community; a thriving, healthy economy; and a thriving, healthy democracy. We owe it to our grandparents, our children, and our grandchildren to protect that progress for future generations.

Mrs. HAYES. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT), the ranking member of the full Committee on Education and Workforce.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Connecticut for her relentless attention on this issue.

First, when we talk about protecting the Department of Education, I think we have to first—when we talk about dismantling the Department of Education, we keep saying we are going to return education to the States. Education never left the States. It has always been with the States.

What the Department of Education has done has been civil rights. The Department of Education has nothing to do with curriculum, teacher qualifications, or the courses needed to graduate from high school. All of those are local and State.

The Department of Education's Federal interests is civil rights beginning in 1954 when the Supreme Court decreed that we could not maintain so-called separate but equal schools.

In *Brown v. Board of Education*, the court said: "It is doubtful that any child may reasonably be expected to succeed in life if he is denied the opportunity of an education. Such an opportunity . . . is a right which must be made available to all on equal terms."

The court then concluded that segregation of students by race denies the students of a minority race of an equal educational opportunity because separate facilities are inherently unequal.

That is what the Supreme Court did in 1954. They didn't tell the State what they would teach. They just said students can't be segregated.

In 1965, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act addressed inequality in education. Title I addressed it by putting money into low-income areas. We fund education with the real estate tax, guaranteeing that low-income areas won't be at a disadvantage, so title I comes in with money for low-income areas.

Other provisions in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act talk about students with disabilities and making sure students with disabilities have a free and appropriate public education. It also supports those for whom English is a second language. It eliminates racial achievement gaps. That is what the Federal role in education is, not what the courses are.

With higher education, Title IX talks about equality of the activities of men and women. We don't tell colleges what to teach, but we just make sure we have Pell grants and student loans so that people can go.

When we dismantle the Department of Education, we are not returning anything to the States. We are just eliminating civil rights. It is no surprise that the first victim in the dismantling of the Department has been the Office of Civil Rights. The Office of Civil Rights enforces civil rights.

The big, ugly bill that they passed earlier this year cuts back on student loans and Pell grants so fewer students can attend. Other actions have been limiting equal opportunity in education.

That is why the dismantling of the Department of Education is so reprehensible. It is not because we are so-called returning anything to the States. It is because we are dismantling civil rights.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Connecticut for all of her work and for her relentless attention on this issue and making sure people understand what is going on.

Mrs. HAYES. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT), the ranking member of the full committee, for that history lesson. It is really important to understand what all of this means.

He is right that I have been relentless on this issue. Not only was I a high schoolteacher but I have benefited from a high-quality public education. I understand what it means for a child in a low-income community who has one shot at getting a good education. If we don't protect that for every child in every community, it is to the detriment of our Nation.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO).

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I thank my good friend and Representative, the gentlewoman from Connecticut, Representative HAYES, for yielding time. I also thank her for putting together this Special Order hour.

The two of us came to Congress from the classroom. We came from the classroom to the Halls of Congress. The two of us were also locked out of the Department of Education earlier this year when we were demanding answers on when President Trump would illegally try to close the Department.

Since then, we have seen Secretary McMahon fire staff from the building who investigate and protect the civil rights of students. We have seen her slash funding for minority-serving institutions. We have seen her move parts of our education infrastructure to unrelated agencies, creating more hoops for administrators and staff to jump through to get the funding they need.

Last week, the Department of Education announced they are moving to end the SAVE program which some 7 million student loan borrowers rely on to have affordable repayment plans on their student loans.

□ 2000

Grocery prices are up. Utilities are up. Healthcare is about to jump for millions of people, and now some student loan borrowers will have to find money to pay their student loans. The math simply won't work for millions of Americans and for these students who need to pay off their loans.

Secretary McMahon has usurped Congress' role by firing staff, holding up grants that Congress has approved, and running a multimillion-dollar experiment by shuttering the Department and making six different Federal agencies do the work of one.

Democrats have worked to conduct oversight for our Nation's students, but

Republicans couldn't care less if title I schools get the funding they need; if students have their civil rights violated; or if the promise of a free, quality education is for all students.

Their agenda is one that seeks to privatize and voucherize the public school system and to make getting degrees and credentials as hard as possible for those who are not well-off or well-connected.

Students, no matter how complex their needs, how much money they come from, how much wealth they come from, or the ZIP Code they grew up in, are entitled to a free, quality education.

Mr. Speaker, if we want to save public education, a free and quality education for all children, we can't have half of this body ready to give up their power and conduct no oversight while permanent changes are being made at the Department of Education.

Secretary McMahon has only appeared before the Education and the Workforce Committee once this year and has since taken the most extreme actions and attacks on public education this country has ever seen.

Republicans must join me and my colleagues in conducting oversight for the students in this country. We are living in a time when more and more Americans don't feel like the American Dream is in reach. I am pleading—pleading—with Republicans to join me—to join us—in giving hope to Americans that the promise of a quality education is still alive for every child.

We cannot delay or wait until harm is brought to any school district or teacher or student. This must end. The mission of the Department must continue. As far as I am concerned and as far as the Democratic Caucus is concerned, the mission of this Department will continue.

Mrs. HAYES. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from California and comment that the gentleman is exactly right. If this administration or Secretary McMahon have a different vision for the Department of Education, then they need to come before Congress and lay that out. We need to have hearings. That needs to be done in the light of day for the public to truly understand how this will impact their children.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Oregon (Ms. BONAMICI).

Ms. BONAMICI. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for organizing this Special Order hour but also for her leadership. We are so fortunate to have Representative HAYES on the Committee on Education and Workforce, National Teacher of the Year, and I will say what an honor it is to serve with the gentlewoman.

Mr. Speaker, I ran for Congress because I care so much about public education. Although I haven't been a teacher, I spent a lot of time in public schools myself, as a parent volunteer, serving on committees, and advocating for education over the years.

Little did I ever dream that I would come to Congress and have to fight for the actual existence of the Department of Education. We are watching—and I condemn in the strongest terms—this illegal and unconstitutional dismantling of the Department of Education. What message does it say to our country and around the world that we won't have a Department of Education? We are going to fight this because we know that the Department of Education was created by an act of Congress, and only Congress can eliminate it.

We look at what is happening with all of these programs—the programs that help low-income students, students with disabilities, and higher ed.

I got through community college and college and law school because I had Federal support. Programs like TRIO and GEAR UP that help underserved students, these are all under attack. It feels like we are just watching the unfolding of the Project 2025 playbook. Now we are seeing the Secretary try to outsource all of these things to other agencies.

Mr. Speaker, I tell you: Poll after poll shows that the majority of parents across the country support the Department of Education, and that is especially true with parents of students with disabilities. They know how important that is. I tell you: Over my years and decades as an education advocate, I have never had anyone say to me: We need less money for IDEA.

It is always: Please fully fund IDEA.

People know that public education is an investment. They know that our students are our future. Yet we are seeing a Congress here where our colleagues, Representative HAYES, found \$170 billion with a b—\$170 billion to give to the Department of Homeland Security to carry out an inhumane mass deportation agenda.

Imagine if we had \$170 billion to carry out a mass education agenda. That would be wonderful for our country and for our economy. I tell you: Right now, we are seeing this war on public education, but we are not going to back down.

I think about the education laws. I know Ranking Member SCOTT talked about the civil rights obligations of the Department of Education, and we know that a lot of the education laws that came about were signed by President Johnson in the civil rights era to expand opportunities and to close opportunity gaps.

Right now, there are approximately 25,000 pending civil rights complaints at the Office for Civil Rights, which has been gutted.

Mr. Speaker, 7 of the 12 regional offices were closed, and 90 percent of the Office for Civil Rights employees have been issued termination notices. Now the Department has tried to call some of them back because they can't handle the backlog. That is government inefficiency, not government efficiency.

Ms. HAYES. Yes.

Ms. BONAMICI. Look at the inter-agency agreements, where they are

trying to outsource all of these programs to other agencies that don't have the staff, don't have the expertise, and Congress didn't approve it.

I am here with you today, Representative HAYES, to say: We need the Department of Education. The Republican majority cannot abolish that. The Trump administration cannot abolish the Department of Education without congressional aid.

I wanted to ask Representative HAYES: We have had some conversations, you and I, where we hear people say: Well, we have to close down the Department of Education because students aren't doing as well now ever since the Department of Education existed.

If you will engage in a brief colloquy with me, and let's talk about why that is an erroneous assumption.

Mrs. HAYES. I will. Well, for many school districts, as the student population gets larger and they are dealing with all of the issues that kids come to school with, we have to make sure that kids are on green and ready to learn. However, the Department of Education provides for some of those wraparound services, some of those summer programs and meal programs that kids have at school. These are all of the things that help kids to learn.

We have to make sure that we fill the gap from decades of disinvestment. We can't just never have schools adequately resourced and expect different results, never have teachers properly prepared and expect different results. We need to, as a nation, make educating our children a priority, which has not happened.

Ms. BONAMICI. Absolutely.

Mrs. HAYES. In many districts, they are always struggling just to catch up. In title I low-income districts, they are always—they are always at a disadvantage. So the answer is not to disinvest. We need to figure out what is working and amplify those programs. If there are places where we can become more efficient, then we address those things.

Ms. BONAMICI. That is why we have Federal education research, which they are also trying to cut. I tell you: If we could fully fund IDEA, if we could fully fund title I for low-income schools, fund title II for professional development, fund title III for English language learners, and fund title IV-A for well-rounded education that includes the arts and music, school security, and technology, imagine.

What would that look like, Representative HAYES?

Mrs. HAYES. Well, I just think about my district, and while my State of Connecticut got approximately \$170 billion from the Federal Government for special education services for students, there is no way a State can backfill those gaps without support from the Federal Government.

When communities start to look at the programs that they will have to cut because they lack funding and understand what those supports mean, I

think we will see an uproar from parents, from educators, from elected officials, and from leaders around the country because our children are the ones who will suffer.

I think what is most egregious is that this is all happening, to your point, against the background of increasing defense budgets, against the background of cutting healthcare and nutrition assistance programs for families.

While all the programs that are meant to support the most vulnerable people are stripped and cut, tax breaks to the wealthiest individuals, and even more than the Department of Defense asks for, is allocated. At some point, we have to prioritize the education of our children.

Ms. BONAMICI. Absolutely. Kids can't learn if they are hungry, if they are homeless, or if they are sick. Those programs really matter.

I thank Representative HAYES for leading this. We must protect the Department of Education. It is the future of our children.

More than 90 percent of the students in this country attend public schools. It is a good investment, and that is true from early childhood to the K-12 system and higher education, as well.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Mrs. HAYES. I am with her in the fight.

□ 2010

Mrs. HAYES. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire how much time is remaining.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CRANK). The gentlewoman from Connecticut has 2 minutes remaining.

Mrs. HAYES. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues who joined me.

In a statement from my colleague from Connecticut, Congresswoman ROSA DELAURO, she talks about her support for the Department of Education and really reminds us that this administration has empowered Russ Vought, the author of the anti-education, anti-American, pro-billionaire Project 2025, this manifesto that lays out literally firing thousands of Federal employees and decimating the Department of Education.

Congresswoman DELAURO talks about her family, growing up in New Haven, her parents who immigrated here, working in a garment factory, and education really being the catalyst for a better life. That story has not changed in all of these years.

There are so many families and so many students that I taught, and so many kids that just need accommodations, with parents who are left wondering what will happen next. If this is the path that we are to take, I implore my Republican colleagues to not usurp our Article I authorities, to demand that we have some transparency and clarity for what this looks like, to demand that the Secretary of Education come before the Congress and assure parents about what the future of public education looks like and make sure they know that their children will not be left behind.

This is something that, again, is near and dear to me, not just because of the profession that I chose in my adult life, but because education saved my life. Without public schools, an education, community college, and teachers who cared about me, my life would have taken a very different direction. I know that there are so many kids who are in that situation right now.

I will continue my work to protect the Department of Education and to protect public education for our children, to make sure that they at least have a shot at an education to change the trajectory of their future and their families.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

PRINTING OF PROCEEDINGS OF FORMER MEMBERS PROGRAM

Mr. BRESNAHAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the proceedings during the former Members program be printed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD and that all Members and former Members who spoke during the proceedings have the privilege of revising and extending their remarks.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Pennsylvania?

There was no objection.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. BRESNAHAN. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 8 o'clock and 13 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Tuesday, December 16, 2025, at 10 a.m. for morning-hour debate.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

EC-2381. A letter from the Manager, Legal Litigation and Support, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Canada Limited Partnership (Type Certificate Previously Held by C Series Aircraft Limited Partnership (CSALP); Bombardier, Inc.) Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2025-0206; Project Identifier MCAI-2024-00525-T; Amendment 39-23147; AD 2025-19-07] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received December 5, 2025, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

EC-2382. A letter from the Manager, Legal Litigation and Support, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Airbus SAS Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2025-3427; Project Identifier MCAI-2025-01344-T; Amendment 39-23166; AD 2025-20-13] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received December 5, 2025, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

EC-2383. A letter from the Manager, Legal Litigation and Support, FAA, Department of