



PATRICK K. RYAN
Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

April 23, 2025

The Honorable Linda McMahon
Secretary
United States Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202

Dear Secretary McMahon,

I am writing to express my deep concern over the future of the federal Impact Aid program at the Department of Education.

The Highland Falls-Fort Montgomery Central School District (CSD), which I represent, receives Impact Aid because the United States Military Academy, or West Point, is in the district. This means that only 7% of the CSD's land is actually taxable, while most school districts in New York can tax upwards of 80% of their land. To further complicate matters, Impact Aid is one of a small handful of federal education programs that is not forward funded, meaning that funds are used in real time to pay staff and maintain operations. This creates a significant funding gap the CSD must reckon with every single year; Impact Aid helps bridge that gap.

As the CSD serves many children of West Point families, the military ties in the broader Highland Falls area provide a unique common thread throughout the community. Impact Aid funds help to ensure the children in military communities have access to the same educational opportunities as other children. As the first West Point graduate to represent the Academy in Congress, it is my priority to never leave our military families behind.

This administration's attacks on the Department of Education, demonstrated by the Reduction in Force Executive Order signed by the President in March, will directly impact the Highland Falls-Fort Montgomery Central School District. Major staffing cuts at the Department of Education and potential disruptions in program funding would harm the educational outcomes of CSD students and the district's dedicated teaching and support staff. The administration has made it known that by weakening the Department of Education, it is seeking to return education authority to the states. Impact Aid, however, is an excellent example of a federal program that

avoids bureaucratic red tape by sending money directly to school districts to use at their discretion, targeting funds directly to areas with the greatest need. I implore you to prevent the President's Reduction in Force order from causing further harm, confusion, and uncertainty to America's Impact Aid school districts.

The Impact Aid program is a promise to our students that no matter where they live, they have a right to a quality education in a well-resourced school. Our students deserve nothing less than the federal government fulfilling this promise.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of several loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Patrick K. Ryan
Member of Congress