

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

October 24, 2025

The Honorable Linda McMahon
Secretary of Education
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202

Dear Secretary McMahon:

We write with serious concern regarding reports that the Department of Education has terminated all of the federal workers in the Impact Aid Program Office.¹ As Members of Congress representing Arizona, which receives the largest allocation of Impact Aid in the country, we are deeply troubled by these layoffs and their potential to cause irreparable harm in schools across our state.² Already, the Impact Aid Program has faced persistent challenges due to decades of underfunding.³ The dismissal of federal employees tasked with administering Impact Aid payments only stands to exacerbate these issues, further undermining a vital source of assistance for federally impacted school districts.

Impact Aid has long garnered bipartisan support due to the significant role it plays in school districts where federal activity has reduced the available tax base.⁴ Because federal lands are tax exempt, school districts located on military bases, tribal reservations, and other federal properties often struggle to obtain the resources necessary for everything from building renovations to textbooks. The Impact Aid program fills this gap by providing recipients with the funding they need to cultivate safe and high-quality learning environments. Furthermore, since funds are directly transferred to school districts, local leaders are empowered to address the unique needs of their students.⁵ Impact Aid payments are considered general aid, which allows districts to distribute and use funds for a variety of core priorities ranging from teacher salaries to purchases of computers and other classroom technology.⁶

While Impact Aid benefits states across the nation, Arizona is particularly reliant on this program due to our many military installations and vast tribal lands. In Fiscal Year 2025, our state received over \$223 million in Impact Aid funding, an allocation that far exceeds that of other

¹ <https://www.edweek.org/policy-politics/many-districts-will-lose-federal-funds-until-the-shutdown-ends/2025/10>

² <https://www.nafisdc.org/impact-aid-resources/impact-aid-payments/>

³ <https://www.nafisdc.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/Federal-Shutdown-Putting-Impact-Aid-School-Districts-at-Risk.pdf>

⁴ <https://www.nafisdc.org/policy-advocacy/nafis-current-priorities/>

⁵ <https://www.nafisdc.org/impact-aid-resources/about-impact-aid/>

⁶ <https://www.ed.gov/about/ed-offices/oese/impact-aid-program/impact-aid-program-overview>

states.⁷ This assistance has had wide-reaching impacts throughout Arizona, with 59 school districts benefiting from it and some even relying on it for roughly half of their yearly budget.⁸ Impact Aid payments have specifically enabled our schools to make improvements that directly promote students' well-being. Examples of these types of projects include window upgrades to ensure appropriate classroom temperatures and wells to ensure an adequate supply of water.⁹ Funding has also been used for other critical purposes such as teacher housing, a crucial tool for Arizonan schools that struggle to maintain their staff due to their location on rural or remote tribal lands.¹⁰

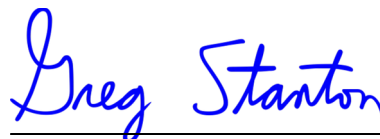
By supporting federally impacted school districts with the funds necessary to meet their students' needs, Impact Aid fulfills an important and distinctive function. In Arizona especially, it is a lifeline for schools serving our tribal and military communities. For these reasons, we urge you to reverse the recent layoffs at the Impact Aid Program Office. Without staff, it is unclear how the office will continue to operate, and without the office, it is unclear how federally impacted schools in Arizona and elsewhere will receive the payments and technical assistance they need.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter.

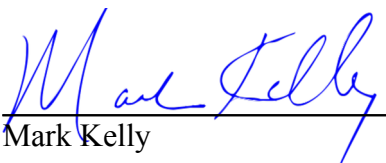
Sincerely,



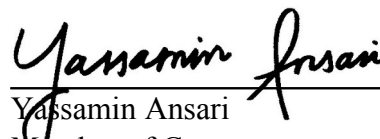
Ruben Gallego
United States Senator



Greg Stanton
Member of Congress



Mark Kelly
United States Senator



Yassamin Ansari
Member of Congress

⁷ <https://www.nafisd.org/impact-aid-resources/impact-aid-payments/>

⁸ <https://azcapitoltimes.com/news/2025/10/12/tribal-schools-lose-federal-impact-aid-amid-government-shutdown/>

⁹ <https://www.gao.gov/assets/a297508.html>

¹⁰ <https://azcapitoltimes.com/news/2025/10/12/tribal-schools-lose-federal-impact-aid-amid-government-shutdown/>