

BILL SUMMARY: Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Fiscal Year 2026 Appropriations Bill

Bill protects essential funding to help students thrive, keep families healthy, and help workers get ahead—and provides funding boosts for medical research, substance use treatment, child care, and more

Democrats defeat over three dozen extreme Republican riders—and draconian cuts pushed by President Trump

Washington, D.C. – The Fiscal Year 2026 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act provides \$224 billion in discretionary funding, \$50 billion more than President Trump’s budget request.

The bill sustains key funding that families count on, rejecting President Trump’s severe cuts, and it rejects extreme riders—over three dozen in total—that were included in House Republicans’ draft bill. The bill reasserts congressional authority over federal funding by providing hundreds of specific funding levels and directives and including new measures that help ensure funding is spent as intended.

Key Points & Highlights – Department of Health and Human Services

Department of Health and Human Services (HHS): The bill provides \$116.8 billion, an increase of \$210 million in discretionary funding for the Department of Health and Human Services over fiscal year 2025 and \$33 billion more than President Trump’s budget request.

The bill rejects the Trump administration’s harmful efforts to defund and dismantle critical work that HHS oversees—protecting critical funding and providing targeted increases for key programs across HHS. From child care and Head Start, to substance use and mental health, to lifesaving research into cures and treatments for devastating diseases—the bill delivers essential funding to help Americans thrive. It also reasserts Congress’ power over key spending decisions, preventing Secretary Kennedy from unilaterally cutting and defunding programs, and it includes new measures to help ensure funding is spent as intended to protect programs that touch the lives of every American. This includes specifying funding levels in law for hundreds of programs the Trump administration has eliminated or repeatedly threatened and new measures to help ensure adequate staffing to carry out programs in a timely and effective manner and to ensure funds go out the door in a timely way.

The bill includes none of House Republicans' extreme policy riders, which would have restricted access to reproductive health care, banned gun research, and promoted discrimination, among much else.

Biomedical Research: The bill provides \$48.7 billion in discretionary funding for the National Institutes of Health (NIH)—an increase of \$415 million over fiscal year 2025 to propel life-saving and life-changing cures and treatments across NIH's 27 institutes and centers and the Advanced Research Projects Agency for Health (ARPA-H).

The bill rejects the catastrophic 40% cut to NIH proposed by President Trump, and instead of slashing funding for biomedical research, includes the following funding increases over fiscal year 2025:

- \$128 million increase for cancer research;
- \$100 million increase for Alzheimer's disease research;
- \$30 million increase for the Office of Research on Women's Health;
- \$23 million increase for the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases;
- \$15 million increase for ALS research;
- \$10 million increase for the IMPROVE Initiative for research on maternal mortality;
- \$10 million increase for diabetes research;
- \$10 million increase for rare disease research;
- \$9 million increase for the Undiagnosed Diseases Network;
- \$5 million to implement the National Parkinson's Project; and
- \$4 million increase for BRAIN Initiative research.

The bill rejects the Trump administration's proposal—and illegal efforts—to cap indirect cost rates at 15%, which would devastate biomedical research, and it continues a longstanding provision that prohibits NIH from implementing such a cap. The bill also rejects the Trump administration's misguided elimination of programs across NIH by maintaining level funding for HIV vaccine research, training programs that support the next generation of researchers, and the Safe to Sleep campaign, among others.

The bill includes a new provision that prevents implementation of the Office of Management and Budget's misguided policy for NIH to fund significantly more multi-year research grants in one lump sum. This poorly thought-out policy would significantly cut the number of research grants NIH awards — just as it did in fiscal year 2025 when it resulted in 2,000 fewer research grants being funded. More needs to be done to protect NIH research, but the provision included in this bill is an important step in preventing the Trump administration from decimating the biomedical research enterprise Congress has built in a bipartisan manner over decades, which has long been the envy of the world and drives medical innovation that has saved millions of lives.

The bill also includes a new authority for NIH to address loopholes in sexual harassment reporting and strengthen accountability by requiring institutions to complete investigations into concerns about harassment, bullying, retaliation, or hostile working

conditions, even if the alleged perpetrator leaves their current position and is no longer employed by the institution.

Child Care and Early Learning Programs: The bill includes \$8.8 billion for the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG), an \$85 million increase over fiscal year 2025; and \$12.4 billion for Head Start, an \$85 million increase. Much more needs to be done to address our broken child care system and ensure every working family can find and afford child care, which is critical for businesses and our economy too. But sustained annual increases in these programs are critical in the meantime. The bill also sustains funding for Preschool Development Grants, which President Trump pushed to defund and House Republicans' bill eliminated.

Addressing Substance Use Disorders and Mental Health: The bill provides \$7.4 billion for the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), an increase of \$65 million over fiscal year 2025 delivering increased funding to address the rising toll of opioid overdoses fueled by fentanyl, maintain access to substance use disorder prevention and treatment, and improve access to mental health services.

In addition to rejecting President Trump's proposed \$1 billion cut (-15%) to SAMHSA programs, the bill maintains SAMHSA as its own, independent agency to help ensure substance use and mental health remain a priority at HHS. The bill also includes new guardrails to ensure SAMHSA funds are allocated as intended.

The bill includes:

- \$991 million, a \$5 million increase over fiscal year 2025, for the Mental Health Block Grant;
- \$2.0 billion, a \$5 million increase, for the Substance Use Prevention, Treatment, and Recovery Services Block Grant;
- \$1.6 billion for State Opioid Response grants, a \$20 million increase;
- and \$145 million for the Rural Communities Opioid Response Program.

It protects and strengthens key investments in mental health programs by increasing funding for Project AWARE, the Garrett Lee Smith Suicide Prevention Program, the National Strategy for Suicide Prevention, and the National Childhood Traumatic Stress Network. The bill also provides \$535 million, a \$15 million increase over fiscal year 2025, for the 988 Suicide Prevention Lifeline, to provide additional support for the program as reliance on 988 increases since it was launched.

Additionally, the bill delivers a floor of \$164 million in investments within the Department of Education to address the shortage of school-based mental health professionals and services in our nation's K-12 schools.

Essential Health Care Programs: The bill protects investments in health care access and affordability, and the health care workforce—maintaining investments in core programs, including \$1.86 billion for Community Health Centers and \$130 million for the National Health Service Corps. The United States Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) is fully funded—rejecting President Trump's 36% proposed cut—and the bill

affirms support for the mission and scientific integrity of the task force, rejecting President Trump and Secretary Kennedy's efforts to sideline its work to ensure that Americans have affordable access to critical services. The bill also includes a \$53.3 million increase in rural health programs to boost recruitment of health care providers to practice in rural areas and support rural hospitals.

The bill provides a \$5 million increase in funding for the Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network (OPTN) Modernization Initiative to help strengthen and reform the nation's organ donation and transplant system. There are more than 100,000 individuals on the organ transplant waitlist, and this initiative, launched in 2023, is strengthening accountability and will allow the OPTN to better serve patients and families.

Public Health: The bill includes \$9.1 billion for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), rejecting the roughly \$4 billion—or 50%—cut to CDC programs proposed by the Trump administration, as well as the \$1.7 billion overall cut included in House Republicans' bill. The bill also requires HHS to support staffing levels to carry out the CDC's programs.

The bill helps support state and local health departments by sustaining critical programs across the CDC, including funding for chronic diseases, the Office of Smoking and Health, injury prevention programs (including firearm injury and mortality research), global health programs, and immunization and infectious disease prevention programs. It provides increases in critical programs including for emerging infectious diseases, food safety, chronic diseases, data modernization, and bolsters state health departments through an increase in Public Health Infrastructure and Capacity grants.

HIV/AIDS: The bill includes level funding of \$613 million for the Ending the HIV Epidemic Initiative, which provides high-need jurisdictions with prevention and treatment services for people at high risk for HIV transmission. This includes \$220 million within three CDC Domestic HIV/AIDS Prevention and Research programs to develop and deploy innovative data management solutions, increase access to PrEP, and better detect and respond to HIV clusters, and it includes \$128.9 million for the CDC's global HIV/AIDS program. The bill also provides level funding for the Ryan White HIV/AIDS program, including dental services and training for health care practitioners, two initiatives that President Trump sought to eliminate in his budget proposal. The bill rejects House Republicans' proposal to cut HIV/AIDS programs by over \$1.5 billion and President Trump's proposal for cuts of over \$900 million.

Women's Health: The bill protects funding for reproductive health programs, including Title X and the Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program, which President Trump and House Republicans proposed eliminating. The bill also increases investments in maternal health across HRSA, CDC, and NIH with a nearly \$60 million increase for programs that aim to address maternal mental health, prevent pregnancy-related deaths, support best practices to improve maternal health outcomes, and invest in women's health research.

For the first time, the bill provides funding for a new menopause initiative, the Menopause Research to Action Network, to translate research into clinical practice for women. The bill also provides funding to states to collect data and report on access to medical forensic exams for survivors of sexual assault. Importantly, the bill increases funding for the Maternal Mental Health Hotline and maternal health safety initiatives, and it protects funding for Healthy Start, which works with moms and babies to improve health outcomes before, during, and after pregnancy. President Trump proposed cuts of over \$600 million in maternal and child health funding in his budget request and proposed defunding the Healthy Start program altogether.

Pandemic Preparedness and Biodefense: The bill includes \$3.69 billion for the Administration for Strategic Preparedness and Response (ASPR). It includes a \$35 million increase over fiscal year 2025 for the Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority (BARDA); a \$25 million increase for Project Bioshield; and a \$20 million increase for the Strategic National Stockpile (SNS). It sustains funding for Industrial Base Management and Supply Chain (IBMSC) activities to help ensure that critical resources in the public health supply chain—including raw materials, medical countermeasures, and ancillary supplies—are manufactured in the United States. It also includes \$2 million to support a new program to improve emergency medical services and trauma care during a public health emergency.

Administration for Community Living (ACL): The bill includes \$2.5 billion, an increase of \$17 million over fiscal year 2025, for ACL, and it rebuffs President Trump's proposal to collapse ACL into other agencies within HHS. ACL plays an instrumental role in supporting older adults and Americans with disabilities so they can live and participate fully in their communities. The bill includes \$1.1 billion for ACL's senior nutrition programs, and it provides targeted increases for family caregiver programs and home and community-based supportive services.

Helping Families Afford Energy Bills: The bill includes \$4.045 billion for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), a \$20 million increase over fiscal year 2025, to help low-income households with home heating and cooling costs.

Key Points & Highlights – Department of Education

Department of Education: The bill provides \$79.0 billion in discretionary funding for the Department of Education, an increase of \$217 million over fiscal year 2025 and \$12 billion more than President Trump's budget request.

The bill rejects the Trump administration's proposals to drastically reduce Department of Education funding and instead continues support for states, school districts, and institutions of higher education. It continues to appropriate funding to the Department of Education for the range of programs it is specifically authorized to carry out by a variety of longstanding, bipartisan authorization statutes that unambiguously place these responsibilities with the Department of Education. This includes funding for K-12 formula and competitive grant programs, career and technical education (CTE) and adult education programs, federal student aid, postsecondary competitive grants, civil

rights enforcement and program administration, and oversight necessary to help states implement federal laws intended to improve educational outcomes for students and protect all students from discrimination. As the Trump administration continues to illegally offload the Department of Education's responsibilities—creating new inefficiencies, costs, and risks to funding for states and schools and threatening educational outcomes—the agreement states that no authority exists for the Department of Education to transfer its fundamental responsibilities to other agencies. The bill also includes a new requirement for the Department to maintain the staff necessary to fulfill its statutory responsibilities, including carrying out programs and activities funded in this bill in a timely manner.

It also includes new measures to ensure the Department of Education makes formula grants available to states and districts on time, preventing funding from being withheld and creating chaos for students, teachers, and families.

Elementary and Secondary Education: The bill strengthens investments in foundational formula grant programs for elementary and secondary education and in public schools, teachers, and students—rejecting the \$4.5 billion cut and proposed consolidations in President Trump's budget request for a new \$2 billion block grant program.

The bill boosts funding for Title I-A grants by \$20 million above the fiscal year 2025 level to \$18.4 billion. It rejects House Republicans' proposal to rescind and cut a combined \$4.7 billion from Title I-A. More than 80% of the nation's school districts receive these funds, and nearly 25 million students go to schools receiving Title I funding. The bill also provides \$15.19 billion, an increase of \$20 million over fiscal year 2025, for all three IDEA Special Education State grant programs and retains each as a separate program. IDEA state grant programs support more than seven million students and children with disabilities and their families who receive IDEA services through these programs. The bill also continues all IDEA national programs, rejecting the proposal to consolidate those funds within IDEA state grant programs.

The bill also continues current investments across a range of other important formula and competitive grant programs authorized to improve teaching and learning in elementary and secondary schools, rejecting President Trump's proposed elimination of \$1.5 billion in total funding for nine important programs.

Career and Technical Education (CTE): The bill provides \$1.45 billion for CTE grants and \$729 million for adult education grants and appropriates such funding to the Department of Education to carry out these programs, rejecting President Trump's call to eliminate federal support for adult education. The bill also includes new measures requiring both CTE and adult education formula grants to be awarded in a timely way to prevent any administration from withholding these critical funds, which occurred this past summer.

Higher Education: The agreement provides a total maximum Pell Grant award of \$7,395 for the 2026-2027 award year, protecting the existing Pell Grant and rejecting President Trump's proposal to slash the Pell Grant by over \$1000. This coming school year, Pell Grants are expected to help over 7 million students at all stages of life pursue postsecondary education and further their careers.

The bill also rejects President Trump's proposals to eliminate a range of postsecondary education programs. The bill also reasserts Congress' power over key higher education spending decisions, preventing Secretary McMahon from having the authority to unilaterally cut and defund programs as she did in fiscal year 2025 under Republicans' yearlong continuing resolution.

Instead, the bill sustains current funding for Federal Work Study and the Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant that provide additional need-based aid to students to help them afford postsecondary education. The bill also includes \$70 million for the Teacher Quality Partnership program and \$15 million for the Hawkins Centers of Excellence to help educator preparation programs address educator shortages. It also continues other investments available to recruit, develop, and retain an effective and diverse teacher and school leader workforce, including \$90 million required to be used for the Supporting Effective Educator Development program. President Trump proposed defunding each of these programs.

The bill includes \$1.191 billion for TRIO, level with fiscal year 2025; \$388 million for GEAR UP, level with fiscal year 2025; \$75 million for the Child Care Access Means Parents in School Program (CCAMPIS), level with fiscal year 2025; and \$80 million for International Education programs. President Trump proposed defunding each of these programs.

The agreement also increases funding for all Title III and V programs that support HBCUs, Hispanic Serving Institutions, Tribal colleges, and other minority-serving institutions. The agreement rejects President Trump's elimination of programs funded under the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE) and ensures the Trump administration will have to carry out FIPSE programs as instructed by Congress. Within FIPSE, the bill funds the Postsecondary Student Success Grant Program at \$45 million, the Basic Needs Grant Program at \$10 million, the Centers of Excellence for Veteran Student Success Program at \$9 million, the HBCU, TCU, and MSI Research and Development Infrastructure Grants Program at \$15 million, the Open Textbook Pilot at \$7 million, the Rural Secondary and Economic Development Grant Program at \$45 million, and the Transitioning Gang-Involved Youth to Higher Education program at \$5 million.

The bill also sustains funding for the administration of student aid programs. This funding supports a wide range of activities, including: implementing the FAFSA; disbursing student aid; ensuring services are available to student loan borrowers; implementing more affordable repayment plans; and fixing longstanding issues in student loan forgiveness programs. Finally, the bill maintains provisions from the

Senate bill to help Congress conduct oversight over the new higher education provisions contained in the One Big Beautiful Bill Act.

Protecting Students from Discrimination: The bill rejects President Trump's proposed cut of \$49 million, or one-third of the total budget, for the Office for Civil Rights, and instead maintains its current budget of \$140 million and requires the Department to support the staffing levels necessary for OCR to fulfill its statutory responsibilities. The Department of Education recently recalled more than 200 staff after reducing half the staff at OCR early last year and allowing its backlog of work to grow, denying students and families timely remediation of illegal discrimination.

Advancing Education Research, Statistics, and Assessments: The bill rejects the massive reduction of \$532 million or 67% proposed in President Trump's budget request for the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) and instead provides \$790 million, a reduction of \$3 million, for IES. The Trump administration's significant workforce reductions and program delays at IES this year have caused it to fail to meet statutory requirements. The bill requires the Department to support staffing levels necessary for IES and the National Center for Education Statistics to fulfill their statutory responsibilities.

Key Points & Highlights – Department of Labor

Department of Labor: The bill provides \$13.7 billion in discretionary funding for the Department of Labor, an increase of \$65 million over fiscal year 2025 and \$4 billion more than the budget request.

The bill rejects the harmful cuts proposed by President Trump, including his proposal to block grant our nation's workforce training programs. The bill also includes a new requirement for the Department to maintain the staff necessary to carry out its statutory responsibilities, including carrying out programs and activities funded in this bill in a timely manner.

Workforce Development: The bill includes \$2.9 billion for Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) formula grants, protecting essential investments made in recent years. It provides \$285 million for Registered Apprenticeships and \$105 million for YouthBuild. The agreement also rejects President Trump's call to eliminate Job Corps and instead provides \$1.76 billion and blocks the elimination of Job Corps Centers unless such closures meet statutory and regulatory requirements. Rejecting President Trump's proposed cuts and continuing funding for these key workforce development programs will help grow the economy, provide workers with the skills they need to secure good-paying jobs of the future, and help American businesses compete globally.

Worker Protection: The bill rejects drastic reductions proposed in President Trump's request and adopted in House Republicans' bill and sustains key investments in DOL's worker protection agencies charged with enforcing requirements for employers to pay workers what they earn and provide safe and healthy workplaces. The bill maintains

\$191 million in funding for the Employee Benefits Security Administration, which is responsible for, among other things, ensuring private sector employment-based group health plans comply with mental health and substance use disorder parity requirements. The bill also maintains \$260 million for the Wage and Hour Division to support the Division's work to recover wages workers are owed and to combat exploitative child labor. Last year, the Division secured nearly \$259 million in back wages collected for nearly 177,000 workers nationwide.

The bill also provides current funding of \$116 million for the Bureau of International Labor Affairs, \$46 million more than President Trump's budget request and a rejection of House Republicans' proposal to outright defund the Bureau. These funds are used to support and enforce labor provisions of free trade agreements and trade preference programs and combat international child labor and forced labor. Finally, the bill rejects the proposed elimination of the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs and Women's Bureau. Instead, the bill provides \$100 million for OFCCP and current funding of \$23 million for the bureau.

Key Points & Highlights – Related Agencies

Social Security Administration (SSA): The bill includes \$15.0 billion for SSA's administrative expenses—an increase of \$554 million over fiscal year 2025. This is \$50 million more than President Trump's budget request and will help address staffing challenges and improve service to the public. The Trump administration has single-handedly and unnecessarily created chaos at SSA that has weakened Americans' ability to get the benefits they are owed. The American public and the beneficiaries SSA serves—seniors, people with disabilities, and those who have recently lost a loved one—have paid the price, with unacceptable wait times to access the benefits and services they deserve, and that they have literally earned through a lifetime of work. SSA should focus on improving service after the harmful cuts and chaotic policies the Trump administration has put in place, and the resources in this bill will help them do that if they choose.

AmeriCorps: The agreement rejects President Trump push to eliminate AmeriCorps and instead sustains funding for all of AmeriCorps' grant programs by providing a total of \$1.25 billion to the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) to administer these programs. The bill also includes new provisions requiring any administration to award AmeriCorps state formula funding in a timely way and to ensure CNCS will award competitive grants in a timely fashion, as well. The bill also rejects attempts to rename AmeriCorps. This investment will continue support for AmeriCorps members serving in communities across the country and working to address pressing challenges, including responding to natural disasters, assisting in schools, supporting our veterans, promoting economic opportunity, and conserving and protecting the environment.

Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB): As a result of Congressional Republicans' approval of the Rescissions Act of 2025—the first ever partisan rescissions bill signed into law—no funds are provided in the bill for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and the more than 1,500 locally owned public TV and radio stations nationwide that expected continued support. For over 50 years CPB funds and infrastructure investments supported local public media stations. Republicans' devastating rescissions bill has severely hurt 120 stations that relied on CPB for more than 25% of their revenue and has already started to shutter local stations. In addition, dozens of other stations have eliminated staffing, programming, and service hours with more expected in the future.

Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS): The bill rejects President Trump's budget proposal to eliminate and defund IMLS and instead provides \$292 million, a small reduction of \$3 million relative to fiscal year 2025, to maintain critical investments in America's libraries and museums. The bill also includes new measures to help ensure IMLS allocates funding as required by the bill.

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