

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

September 8, 2023

The Honorable Miguel A. Cardona
Secretary, Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202

Dear Secretary Cardona,

Thank you for your continued leadership and efforts to make our schools safer. We share your focus on the safety of our students and the work necessary to ensure all students are protected from gun violence.

For decades, schools across the country have provided archery and hunter education classes with funding authorized by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965. These classes are especially important in rural areas where people hunt for both food and sport, including many of our constituents.

We are concerned about the U.S. Department of Education's (Department) interpretation of a provision in the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act (BSCA), which has resulted in the halting of federal funds for archery and hunter safety education in schools. We understand that the Department interprets the restriction on funding for activities that provide to any person a dangerous weapon or train in the use of a dangerous weapon to mean that archery and hunter safety education programs are ineligible for funding.


However, we believe the Department's interpretation goes against Congressional intent. Further, we believe that the Department's current interpretation deprives numerous students of educational opportunities that help students do better in school, teach safety and personal responsibility, and provide outdoor sporting and recreation lessons to students across the country. We are further troubled that the Department's interpretation has already led some schools to stop offering these classes to their students.

We believe the intent in this provision was to restrict federal ESEA funding for armed school resource officers and the arming of teachers, not to prohibit ESEA funding for archery and hunter safety classes for students.

Let us be clear: we strongly support the BSCA, which passed into law in 2022 with bipartisan support in Congress and took important steps toward achieving greater gun violence prevention. We respectfully request you to reconsider your interpretation, and we stand ready to work with the Department to find a legislative fix to this issue if necessary.

We appreciate your review and consideration, and we look forward to your timely response.

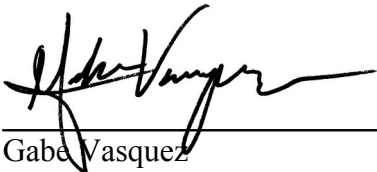
Sincerely,



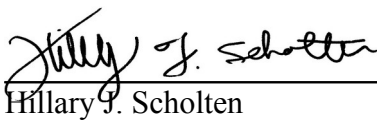
Val Hoyle
Member of Congress



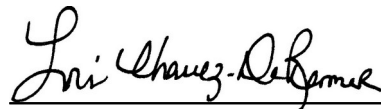
Mike Thompson
Member of Congress



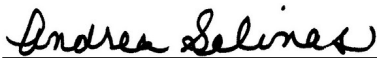
Gabe Vasquez
Member of Congress



Hillary J. Scholten
Member of Congress



Lori Chavez-DeRemer
Member of Congress



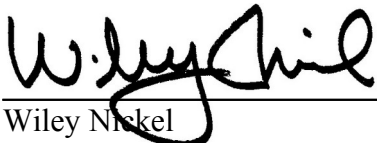
Andrea Salinas
Member of Congress



Mary Sattler Peltola
Member of Congress



Abigail Davis Spanberger
Member of Congress



Wiley Nickel
Member of Congress



Steven Horsford
Member of Congress



Chris Pappas
Member of Congress



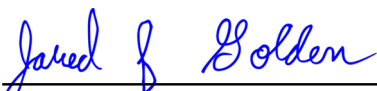
Marie Gluesenkamp Perez
Member of Congress



Susie Lee
Member of Congress



Valerie P. Foushee
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Jared Golden
Member of Congress



Elissa Slotkin
Member of Congress



Kim Schrier, M.D.
Member of Congress