

US Supreme Court greenlights destruction of Department of Education

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In a decision with far-reaching implications for democratic rights and public education, the US Supreme Court on Monday allowed the Trump administration to proceed with mass firings at the Department of Education. In a 6–3 vote, the court overruled a May 22 decision by US District Judge Myong Joun in Massachusetts that had temporarily blocked the layoffs.

The unsigned emergency order, issued without argument or explanation, allows Trump to remove 1,400 workers from the department, fast-tracking his administration's long-standing goal of dismantling the cabinet-level agency established by Congress in 1979.

The US Department of Education oversees a wide range of programs serving the needs of 70 million students. It provides more than \$120 billion in financial aid each year to over 13 million students across the country. In the 2020–2021 school year alone, it distributed over \$100 billion directly to public schools—amounting to roughly 11 percent of all funding for public elementary and secondary education nationwide.

Beyond the immediate issue of public education, Monday's ruling marks another major expansion of executive power by the Supreme Court, sanctioning Trump's drive to establish a presidential dictatorship. In a 19-page dissent, Justice Sonia Sotomayor—joined by Justices Elena Kagan and Ketanji Brown Jackson—cited Trump's longstanding pledge to eliminate the Department of Education, noting that doing so is unconstitutional, as only Congress has the authority to create or abolish federal departments.

Sotomayor warned that the Court's decision grants the president unchecked power to nullify laws enacted by Congress. "When the Executive publicly announces its intent to break the law, and then executes on that

promise," she wrote, "it is the Judiciary's duty to check that lawlessness, not expedite it." The ruling, she continued, "hands the Executive the power to repeal statutes by firing all those necessary to carry them out," adding, "the threat to our Constitution's separation of powers is grave."

The high court's ruling disregards statutory protections enacted by Congress against executive reorganization of federal departments, violates the constitutional requirement that the president "take care that the laws be faithfully executed," and undermines key legislation, including the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the Higher Education Act, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

The latest ruling is part of a series of decisions by the gang of fascists that controls the court aimed at dismantling fundamental democratic rights. In July 2024, the court endorsed Trump's claim of "absolute criminal immunity" for actions taken under his "constitutional powers." In April 2025, it further gutted judicial oversight and due process by upholding mass deportations under the Alien Enemies Act.

In the Trump v. CASA ruling of June 2025, the court stripped federal courts of the authority to issue nationwide injunctions against unconstitutional actions by the government—including Trump's drive to abolish birthright citizenship, a right guaranteed by the 14th Amendment.

This week's decision—coming on the heels of last week's ruling permitting the mass firing of federal workers—clearly exposes the class character of the turn toward dictatorship: the dismantling of basic democratic protections to enforce the interests of the financial oligarchy.

The existence and expansion of public education in the United States is the product of the American

Revolution, the Civil War, the global impact of the 1917 Russian Revolution, the civil rights movement, and mass labor battles of the 20th century. Democratic and social rights were not granted from above—they were won through struggle in the face of fierce resistance from the capitalist ruling class.

The dismantling of public education is a key element in the bipartisan social counterrevolution waged over decades by both Democrats and Republicans. Under Trump, this assault has entered a new and far more advanced stage.

Trump has made students, universities, and culture in general a primary target. Billions have been slashed from federal grants supporting the sciences, arts, and social studies. The spending bill signed by Trump earlier this month—which guts Medicaid and food assistance—also cuts \$300 billion in federal student aid over the next decade. It imposes draconian repayment schedules, denies loans to thousands of prospective students, and imposes new taxes on universities.

The Supreme Court's decision paves the way for an intensified assault on every level of public education and the plundering of its resources by the financial oligarchy through privatization. It aims to make meaningful education unattainable to the working class. Exposure to world cultures, history, the arts, and science is to be gutted and replaced with narrow vocational training. The ruling class seeks to funnel youth into two channels: the brutal reindustrialization of the US at home and military service in the predatory wars of American imperialism abroad.

While Trump is leading this assault, it is fully backed by the entire political establishment. The Democrats are doing nothing to oppose the dismantling of social programs because they support it. In cities across the country, Democratic mayors are themselves implementing sweeping cuts to social services and public education. Their opposition to Trump is not based on any principled defense of democratic or social rights, but centers instead on tactical differences over foreign policy—above all, the war against Russia. The Democrats have welcomed the White House's decision to resume arms shipments to Ukraine.

The Supreme Court decision also exposes the bankruptcy of the trade unions' claims that Trump—and the financial oligarchy he represents—can be stopped through the courts. In response to the ruling, the

American Federation of Teachers (AFT) issued a perfunctory statement warning that “children would be especially hurt,” and insisting the union would “never stop fighting.”

In fact, the union apparatus never “started fighting.” The AFT and the National Education Association (NEA) have systematically blocked the mobilization of educators, students and workers against the dismantling of public education. Instead, they offered false assurances that court challenges and appeals to Democratic politicians would somehow prevail.

Teachers were told to participate in symbolic “lobby days” and “walk-ins,” don red shirts, and wait passively while their rights were stripped away. Any remaining illusions in organizations led by proven enemies of the working class—like AFT President Randi Weingarten—must be dispensed with.

The Socialist Equality Party urges educators, students, parents, and all workers to build rank-and-file committees in every school, workplace, and neighborhood as part of the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees (IWA-RFC). These committees must unite every section of the working class in a determined counter-offensive against the social counterrevolution being carried out by the financial oligarchy.

The defense of public education cannot be left in the hands of the courts, the Democrats, or the trade union apparatus. It requires a mass, independent movement of the working class. The right to education, along with every other democratic and social right—including healthcare, housing, secure employment, and a livable planet—depends on putting an end to the domination of society by a parasitic ruling elite.

This means a fight to expropriate the wealth of the oligarchs, dismantle their dictatorship, and reorganize society on the basis of socialism: the democratic control of the economy by the working class in the interests of human need, not private profit.



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