

Trump administration freezes Minnesota child care payments following publication of bogus right-wing propaganda video

Jacob Crosse
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In the wake of a 43-minute “investigative” report published last month by fascist propagandist Nick Shirley, the Trump administration has paused federal funding for child care centers in Minnesota and ordered a review of all 50 states. The pause in funding comes even though several allegations made by Shirley in the video have been proven to be false.

Shirley claimed in his video that locked doors was evidence of fraud. In an interview with CNN last week, Shirley claimed that he thought daycare centers would open their doors for unannounced visitors accompanied by a film crew and masked men acting as “security.” One of the centers Shirley alleged was fraudulent because it was not open actually operates in the afternoon and evening, not the morning. Another center he claimed was closed is in fact operational.

Minnesota Star Tribune reporters were allowed inside four of the 10 facilities featured in Shirley’s propaganda video. While Shirley asserted all of the centers were fraudulent the local reporters witnessed children napping and playing under adult supervision.

This has not stopped the Trump administration from using Shirley’s bogus video to wage war on the working class. In Minnesota alone, some \$185 million in federal child care payments to the state under the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) has been halted. CCAP funding subsidizes child care services for about 23,000 low-income families in the state, affecting some 30,000 children. Health and Human Services spokesperson Andrew Nixon said last week that all 50 states, even those not suspected of fraud, must submit additional paperwork and verification to receive funding.

In an interview with Minnesota Public Radio, Clare Sanford, a board member of the Minnesota Child Care Association, said the effects of the shutoff of federal

funding for child care programs could reverberate beyond the CCAP program. “We do know the immediate effects for those 30,000 children. But beyond that, we’re not sure because we’re not sure if the other things funded by the grant, like licensing, will also be affected,” Sanford said.

Sanford made clear that the cutoff in funding will most directly impact already struggling workers and their families. “The only families who are eligible to get this funding are already very low-income and economically vulnerable families,” she said. Sanford did not know if the state of Minnesota had already received funding for January, noting that if it is cut off, “families lose access to child care. Job loss follows pretty quickly after that, and then housing loss follows. I mean, it’s a real cascade of bad for these families.”

Child care programs are not the only federal funding at risk in Minnesota, which is facing extensive federal inquiry. Several Medicaid-funded social programs are under federal investigation, along with food stamps. In a lawsuit against the federal government, Minnesota Attorney General Keith Ellison claimed that Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins sent the state of Minnesota a letter in December threatening to cut off all funding for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) unless the state recertified and interviewed in person more than 100,000 households currently receiving assistance through the program.

Allegations of child-care and welfare fraud in Minnesota go back decades, and specific federal fraud prosecutions into organizations such as Feeding Our Future began during the Biden administration. The current right-wing fervor over Shirley’s videos is a concerted campaign organized by Republican Party operatives, in league with the fascists in the White House, to strip all federal funding from social programs that benefit workers

and their families.

In Shirley's video, which has been shared widely by Trump administration officials and Elon Musk, Shirley visits several Somali-run child care centers with someone he identifies only as "David." The *Minnesota Star Tribune* and the *Intercept* have confirmed that "David" is in fact David Hoch, a longtime lobbyist and Republican operative. The 65-year-old previously ran for governor in Minnesota as a member of the Resource Party, followed by a 2010 run for Minnesota attorney general as a Republican.

In the video, Hoch escorts Shirley to Somali-run child care centers that he alleged were committing fraud. He boasts that he has "contacts in the Capitol going back many, many years and so the data I am getting is 100 percent accurate, coming directly from research done by people at the state capitol."

At another point in the video, Hoch displays an email printout from Joe Marble, a committee administrator at the Minnesota House of Representatives who previously worked as a research assistant for the House Republican Caucus, according to his LinkedIn account, the *Star Tribune* reported. Like Hoch, Marble was a member of the Resource Party before joining the Republicans and, according to the *Tribune*, the "two friends have been working hand in hand for decades."

While Hoch disputed receiving information from Republicans on alleged child care centers to "investigate," Lisa Demuth, the Republican speaker of the Minnesota House and a candidate for governor, confirmed in a January 1 post on X that "some of the information used in Nick's video was compiled by our staff, whose emails and work were referenced multiple times in the video."

Shirley's "reporting" is nothing more than fascist Republican "research" dumped into his lap to provide a scapegoat and justification for Trump's continued attacks on Somalis, immigrants and the working class as a whole.

The *Intercept* reported that Hoch recently operated a Tik Tok and Instagram account where he spread the same racist and anti-immigrant bile Trump spews every day. In one post viewed by the Intercept, Hoch asserted that "EVERY Somali in [Minnesota] is engaged in fraud. ALL of them."

In a November post, Hoch wrote: "Even the Blacks have had enough of the demon Muslims."

Under conditions in which Trump's popularity continues to collapse, Trump is spreading a new fascist conspiracy theory against his political opponents. In a

January 3, 2026 post on Truth Social, Trump shared a video that featured the headline "Did Tim Walz really have (D) Melissa Hoertman (sic) assassinated???"

In the video, the speaker falsely asserts that Vance Boelter, currently facing murder and stalking charges in connection with the murders of former Minnesota House Speaker Melissa Hortman and her husband Mark, along with the shooting of Minnesota State Senator John Hoffman, his wife Yvette and the attempted shooting of their daughter Hope, was an aide of Walz. In fact, Boelter was a Christian nationalist and Trump supporter.

The shootings took place the morning of June 14, the date of the massive "No Kings" protest against the Trump administration, and the shooter specifically targeted Democratic lawmakers. Following a multiday manhunt, police located Boelter and his vehicle, which had a hit list including 70 other Democratic Party officials and abortion providers.

Erasing his right-wing and pro-Trump politics, the video shared by Trump claimed Boelter "worked for Walz" and that Hortman was killed after she voted to "take away healthcare from illegal immigrants." The rest of the video is an AI voice repeating the same lie, that Boelter worked for Walz and that Hortman was "unalived" after she voted against "a multibillion-dollar money laundering fraud." As the AI voice makes the claim that the alleged fraud "heavily implicated illegal aliens," footage of Shirley in front of a day care center is shown.

Shirley himself has boosted the bogus video. In a January 3 post on X targeting Walz, Shirley wrote: "Why was she killed after speaking out against illegal migrants? Was she a threat to you and your fraudster scheme? RIP TO MELISSA HORTMAN."



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