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## United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION,  
LABOR, AND PENSIONS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6300

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May 16, 2023

### VIA ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSION

The Honorable Miguel Cardona  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Ave., SW  
Washington, DC 20202

Dear Secretary Cardona:

I write to express my concerns over the request made by the Department of Education (the Department) for \$368 million to expand the creation of full-service community schools, as part of its fiscal year 2024 budget.<sup>1</sup> I recognize the unique role that schools serve within their communities, and how, in concept, full-service community schools are a creative solution to address gaps in medical care and related services in communities. However, it has come to my attention that the Department's grant program could allow public school districts, funded by taxpayer dollars, to partner with abortion services providers such as Planned Parenthood to provide services to minors.<sup>2</sup>

Federal law allows for the use of federal funds to provide "pipeline services" in schools.<sup>3</sup> Pipeline services are defined as a "a continuum of coordinated supports, services, and opportunities for children from birth through entry into and success in postsecondary education, and career attainment" and include "social, health, nutrition, and mental health services and supports."<sup>4</sup> The Department's fiscal year 2024 request under this authorization would support 365 new full-service community schools serving an estimated 1.1 million students, families, and community members.<sup>5</sup>

In its 2021 report, the Center for Mental Health in Schools, housed within the University of California, Los Angeles's Department of Psychology, provided suggestions for the next

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of Education, "Fiscal Year 2024 Budget Summary" p. 14 (Accessed on Mar. 14, 2023) <https://www2.ed.gov/about/overview/budget/budget24/summary/24summary.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Federal Register, "Application for New Awards; Full-Service Community Schools Program" (July 13, 2022) <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2022/07/13/2022-15091/applications-for-new-awards-full-service-community-schools-program>

<sup>3</sup> 20 U.S.C. 7272, 7275

<sup>4</sup> *Id.*

<sup>5</sup> U.S. Department of Education, "Fiscal Year 2024 Budget Summary" p. 14 (Accessed on Mar. 14, 2023) <https://www2.ed.gov/about/overview/budget/budget24/summary/24summary.pdf>

generation of full-service community schools and named Planned Parenthood as a potential partner for collaboration.<sup>6</sup> Further, Planned Parenthood has opened 29 clinics in California’s Los Angeles County school districts since 2019, providing emergency contraception and pregnancy testing to students as young as 12 years old without parental notification.<sup>7</sup> While the school-based clinics cannot provide abortions or access to so-called “gender-affirming hormone therapy,” it can make referrals to off-site clinics that would be able to do so.<sup>8</sup>

I would oppose any efforts the Department makes to provide grants for full-service community schools to public school districts that partner with Planned Parenthood. To better understand the Department’s budget proposal and how grant applications will be considered, I request the following information, on a question-by-question basis, by June 15, 2023.

- 1) With the significant expansion of federal funding for full-service community schools, does the Department expect any changes to how the program will be administered?
  - a. If so, do you anticipate needing new guidance documents or pursuing formal regulations?
- 2) To date, has Planned Parenthood, or any other abortion service provider, been listed as a partner on a full-service community school grant application?
  - a. If so, was that applicant awarded a grant?
  - b. If not, would the Department view Planned Parenthood, or any other abortion service provider, as an acceptable partner in the future?
- 3) If the Department considers a clinic run by Planned Parenthood, or any other abortion service provider, as an applicable service provided by full-service community schools, what protections, if any, would the Department implement to ensure that parents and legal guardians are aware of the services provided and are able to access their minor student’s health records?
- 4) If, for some reason, a full-service community school grantee needed to change the partner entity listed on its application, what would be the process for the Department to ensure that provider meets the requirements?

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Bill Cassidy, M.D.  
Ranking Member  
Senate HELP Committee

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<sup>6</sup> University of California at Los Angeles, “Evolving Community Schools and Transforming Student/Learning Supports” p. 10 (Accessed on Mar. 14, 2023) <https://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/evolvecomm.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> Planned Parenthood Los Angeles, “Resources for Student Projects” (Accessed on Mar. 14, 2023) <https://www.plannedparenthood.org/planned-parenthood-los-angeles/local-education-training/resources-student-projects>

<sup>8</sup> Planned Parenthood, “We’re Here With You – Wherever You Are” (Accessed on Mar. 14, 2023) <https://www.plannedparenthood.org/get-care/our-services>