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From Kindergarten to College, Trump Education Cuts Would Hurt Red States the Most



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President Trump is threatening federal education funding in his second term. But if he dismantles core K-12 and higher education programs, it's the states that voted for him that will take the biggest hit. From Trump's actions in his first term to policy recommendations in Project 2025, the Trump Administration perpetuates uncertainty and fear about the future of Title I and Pell Grant funding. These programs provide critical dollars to K-12 school districts serving children from low-income families and low- and moderate-income students pursuing higher education. The states that voted for Trump in 2024 are those that receive the most Title I and Pell Grant aid. While Republicans are laser-focused on budget cuts, slashing Title I or Pell would stab red states in the back.

Title I Cuts Pose a \$10 Billion Threat to Red States

Title I is the single largest federal funding source for K-12 education in the country, with nearly two-thirds of public schools receiving Title I support.¹ Eligible schools enroll at least 40% of their students from low-income families, and the program currently supports over three million disabled students and over 745,000 homeless students.² With these funds, schools hire additional teachers, provide tutoring, and implement targeted assistance programs. Yet, there is reason for concern that President Trump will attempt to eliminate the program altogether.

During his first term, President Trump proposed cutting billions of dollars from the Department of Education.³ Since returning to the White House, he is following the Project 2025 education playbook closely. Project 2025, a detailed policy guide written by the Heritage Foundation, calls for the total elimination of Title I.⁴ It proposes first converting Title I funding to state block grants to be spent with little federal oversight. Then, over the course of 10 years, it proposes cutting these block grants completely with no plan for states to make up the funding shortfall. This would cause millions of disabled, homeless, and impoverished children to lose critical support with no alternative program to fill in the gaps. And students in red states will bear the brunt of this burden.

Title I funding totaled over \$17 billion last year, and no matter which way you cut the data, red states were more dependent on the program than blue.⁵ Red states received more than \$10 billion in Title I funding whereas blue states received \$7 billion.⁶ As seen in the table below, of the 10 states receiving the most funding, seven voted for President Trump—Texas, Florida, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Georgia, Michigan, and North Carolina. Just these seven states alone received about a third of all Title I funds.

This is not to suggest that blue states would be immune from Title I cuts but rather that red states are disproportionately reliant on Title I. If President Trump decides to move forward with his extreme education agenda, young children in red states will pay the largest price.

Top 10 States That Received the Most Title I Funding in 2024

State	Total Title I Funding
CA	\$2,236,833,545
TX	\$1,851,187,951
NY	\$1,489,259,094
FL	\$1,002,332,843
IL	\$794,468,689
PA	\$735,735,642
OH	\$657,263,062
GA	\$610,207,710
MI	\$559,432,779
NC	\$513,886,365

Source: Authors' analyses of US Department of Education "Title I, Part A" federal funding data.



Red States Have the Most to Lose if Pell is Underfunded

President Trump has also not inspired confidence in the future of the Pell Grant program. Pell Grants are awarded based on financial need to help low- and middle-income students pursue postsecondary studies. In his first term, Trump's budget proposal included substantial cuts to the program's reserves, and he failed to raise the maximum award level to adjust for inflation.⁷ Now, the program faces a \$2.7 billion budget shortfall next fiscal year according to the Congressional Budget Office's projections, which could mean cuts to program eligibility and grant awards.⁸

Underfunding the Pell Grant program would disproportionately harm students in states that voted for President Trump. Last year, more than 3.6 million students benefited from Pell in red states, in comparison to 2.7 million Pell recipients in blue states.⁹ As seen in the table below, seven of the top 10

states that received the most Pell Grant aid were red states—Texas, Florida, Arizona, Georgia, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Ohio.¹⁰ Texas accounts for the second-most Pell Grant dollars received at over \$2.8 billion, with Florida following in third with \$2.3 billion last year.¹¹

In total, red states received more than \$17 billion in Pell funding last year, while blue states received \$13 billion.¹² If President Trump or Congressional Republicans threaten the Pell Grant program or fail to make up for the budget shortfall, they threaten the ability of the 3.6 million students in states that voted for the president to pursue higher education and learn skills that are critical for jobs that help local and state workforces thrive.

Top 10 States That Received the Most Pell Grant Aid in 2024

State	Number of Federal Pell Grant Awards	Total Pell Grant Funding Received
CA	899,417	\$4,312,538,348
TX	576,047	\$2,819,328,922
FL	446,819	\$2,259,950,334
NY	377,928	\$2,013,158,144
AZ	293,051	\$1,416,377,351
IL	225,243	\$1,077,126,387
GA	216,907	\$1,057,063,036
NC	182,820	\$885,679,020
PA	173,395	\$853,194,296
OH	167,253	\$774,327,569

Source: Authors' analyses using data from the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities' "2024–2025 State Total" federal student aid data sheets.



Many of the red states that receive the most Pell Grant aid are also the most Title I-reliant. Texas, Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Ohio all went red for Trump in the most recent presidential election, and all make the top 10 lists for receiving the most Title I funding *and* the most Pell Grant funding. Cutting support for these programs would be catastrophic for low-income students

in red states across their educational journeys. If Title I and Pell Grants were axed tomorrow, Texas would lose \$4.6 billion that goes to improving educational outcomes and college affordability. Florida would stand to lose \$3.3 billion, and Vice President JD Vance’s home state of Ohio would lose \$1.4 billion. ¹³

Conclusion

Title I and Pell Grant funding are central pillars of federal support for our nation’s low-income students, and both programs disproportionately benefit red states. With millions of students from coast to coast relying on these programs to access a high-quality education that will support them in preparing for the workforce, President Trump and Congressional Republicans should think twice about cutting core education funding that supports their voters and local economies.

TOPICS

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ENDNOTES

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