

Trump's First 100 Days: Harming Seniors and People with Disabilities

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I. The First 100 Days

President Donald Trump repeatedly said he would not touch the programs millions of seniors and people with disabilities count on – those he vows to "love and cherish" like Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security.¹ Over the past 100 days, we have seen the exact opposite. From slashing health care services for millions of Americans to weakening educational supports for students with disabilities, President Trump's administrative actions are directly harming older adults and people with disabilities. Under the Trump administration, decades of hard-fought gains in health services, education, public health, and retirement and social security will be lost.

With the restructuring of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), the complete dismantling of the Department of Education (ED) and Administration for Community Living (ACL), and significant cuts to the Social Security Administration (SSA), President Trump's actions leave the older adult and disability communities in a state of shock.

This administration's true agenda is clear. President Trump is and will continue to inflict damage on millions of Americans whose primary safety net services and most popular government services are being obliterated. This report will highlight how these destructive executive actions and policy directives will harm older adults and people with disabilities.

II. Slashing Health Care Services

a. Forcing States to Pick Up the Broken Pieces of Medicaid

Medicaid is a partnership between states and the federal government and is the primary program providing comprehensive health and long-term services and supports one in five Americans – nearly 83 million people.² People with disabilities, low-income families, and many older adults and children rely on Medicaid for their well-being, health, safety, and independence. Medicaid covers 10% of older adults³, 35% of people with disabilities⁴, and 63% of nursing home residents.⁵

President Trump, alongside Congressional Republicans, have proposed numerous harmful changes to Medicaid, which will cut federal funding and undermine states' ability to serve their most vulnerable citizens. Such proposals include:

- Reducing the Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP), the amount of money the federal government provides a state to run its Medicaid program. An FMAP decrease will shift the financial responsibility of caring for low-income seniors and people with disabilities to states, requiring states to increase their financial contributions to continue to support their Medicaid population.
- Capping the amount of money the federal government provides states to run their Medicaid programs, either through a block grant or per capita caps, would further shift costs to states. States would be forced to make tough decisions to cut costs, likely eliminating critical optional benefits, such as home and community-based services that allows older adults and people with disabilities to live in their homes and communities, rather than in an institution.

- Taking away coverage from people who do not meet certain work requirements, putting nearly 36 million people at risk of losing coverage.⁶ In fact, most low-income adults enrolled in Medicaid are working, in school, or serve as caregivers. Research shows that work requirements do not help Medicaid recipients find jobs — rather, they just increase states’ administrative costs to run the program.
- Dropping the “80/20” rule, which mandates that 80% of Medicaid payments for home and community-based services go to compensating direct care workers who support older adults and people with disabilities. Rescinding this rule will make it harder to recruit and retain qualified professionals into this workforce.

Any cuts to federal Medicaid funding would leave states with daunting choices, such as cutting services, limiting eligibility, or reducing provider reimbursement rates, which will ultimately increase the number of uninsured Americans and further exacerbate health care workforce shortages. Cuts could also trigger severe economic repercussions, with an estimated one million lost jobs, a \$113 billion decline in states’ gross domestic product, and \$8.8 billion in lost state and local tax revenue in 2026 alone.⁷

Medicaid is already lean and efficient, and any funding cuts, caps, or changes that limit eligibility and services threaten the longstanding guarantee of coverage for the most vulnerable Americans.

b. Undermining Medicare and Making Seniors Pay More for Prescription Drugs

Medicare is the primary health insurance for adults aged 65 and older, those receiving Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), and those with other specific disabilities, such as blindness and end-stage renal disease. With nearly 69 million Americans enrolled in Medicare, older adults and people with disabilities rely on this coverage for prescription drugs, hospitalizations, outpatient care, and a wide range of preventive services.⁸

A vast majority, nearly 90%, of older adults and people with disabilities depend on prescription medications to manage their health conditions, such as diabetes, obesity, dementia, and heart and lung disease.⁹ Under the Biden administration, the Medicare Drug Negotiation program authorized by the *Inflation Reduction Act* created a mechanism for the federal government to negotiate lower prices for certain prescription drugs, making medication more affordable for millions of older adults and people with disabilities.¹⁰ In a whirlwind of executive actions on his first day in office, President Trump rescinded President Biden’s executive order to lower the cost of prescription drugs for seniors on Medicare.¹¹ Since taking office, the Trump administration has systematically undermined the advances made under President Biden, including by:

- Ending payment demonstration models under the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation (CMMI), such as Primary Care First, that would increase access to value-based care for older adults and people with disabilities.
- Cancelling the CMMI generic drug discount program, which made available nearly 150 medications at a \$2 copay and helped 32 million people under Medicare.¹²

- Refusing to finalize a rule that would have expanded Medicare to include coverage for popular weight loss drugs like Ozempic® and Wegovy®.

c. **Limiting Affordable Health Care Coverage**

Over 24 million Americans have access to health care coverage under the *Affordable Care Act* (ACA), and actions taken under President Biden mean that more Americans than ever have access to coverage.¹³ Initially passed as part of the *American Rescue Plan Act* and extended under the *Inflation Reduction Act*, enhanced premium assistance has become an integral part of ensuring Marketplace plans are affordable for enrollees, helping them cover the out-of-pocket costs of their premium.¹⁴

However, the Trump administration is now working to unwind the advances we have made. On March 10, 2025, President Trump issued a proposed rule that, if finalized, would result in two million people losing access to coverage.¹⁵ President Trump’s actions will complicate access to coverage by:

- Making it harder for Americans to enroll in coverage by shortening the annual open enrollment period.¹⁶
- Reducing access for low-income Americans by eliminating the monthly special enrollment period for individuals who become eligible for premium assistance because their projected household income falls below 150% poverty.¹⁷
- Rescinding self-attestation of income eligibility for certain special enrollment periods, thus creating a barrier to coverage for younger enrollees and individuals who have not needed to file a federal income tax return for the previous two years.¹⁸

d. **Demolishing Veterans Affairs Services**

Nearly half (49%) of all veterans in the U.S. are 65 years or older and are also more likely to have a disability than other older adults.¹⁹ As veterans age, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) provides benefits and services that address various issues, including health services and financial challenges. Veterans face several challenges when accessing care through the VA, including complex eligibility requirements, long wait times, and limitations due to geography. Under the Trump administration, proposed plans to cut 83,000 VA employees this year, including up to 20,000 veterans, will exacerbate veterans’ existing barriers to care.²⁰

The Trump administration has also canceled over 500 contracts, tagged as “terminated for convenience.”²¹ Some of these contracts directly support veterans exposed to burn pits, Agent Orange, and other toxic substances. A significant number of veterans exposed to these toxins during military service ultimately file disability claims. The care needed for these veterans is guaranteed under the bipartisan *Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring Our PACT Act*, providing benefits to over one million veterans.²² Contracts targeted for cancellation provide the necessary personnel and resources to reach eligible veterans, screen applicants, and process claims.

Other contracts eliminated focused on cancer research programs, disability ratings and exams, mental health care and suicide prevention, and other medical support for veterans.

III. Public Health Services Collapse

HHS administers more than 100 programs to protect the health of all Americans, with a particular focus on marginalized communities, such as older adults and people with disabilities.²³ In accordance with President Trump's February 11, 2025 executive order, HHS has started to downsize from 82,000 to 62,000 full-time employees and also reorganize the agency, eliminating programs that are critical for protecting the health and well-being of millions of Americans.²⁴⁻²⁵ Over the course of a month, thousands of HHS employees have lost their jobs. As one Food and Drug Administration (FDA) employee, who remained anonymous for fear of retribution, said, "It's a bloodbath".²⁶ In response to these unprecedented cuts, the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee invited HHS Secretary Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. to address its members, but thus far the Secretary has failed to appear in front of the Committee and HHS has failed to answer basic questions about the layoffs.²⁷⁻²⁸

a. Destroying the Administration for Community Living

The Administration for Community Living (ACL) was created to address the fundamental principle that older adults and people with disabilities should be able to participate fully in their communities and live independently. As outlined in the HHS reorganization, ACL will be dismantled, eliminating programs that protect the well-being of vulnerable Americans. Critical programs such as the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program, which protects the health and safety of individuals living in long-term care facilities, will be eliminated. Other programs will be scattered across agencies that do not focus specifically on the aging and disability populations. ACL was created in 2012 to ensure that the nearly 58 million older adults and 61 million adults who report having a disability receive the care they need.²⁹ Actions taken by President Trump and Secretary Kennedy are unconscionable and will result in consequences like an increase in unhoused and institutionalized older adults and people with disabilities.

b. Leaving Seniors and People with Disabilities Hungry

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is the most critical anti-hunger program in the U.S. The program provides more than 41 million low-income people the opportunity to afford a nutritionally adequate diet. President Trump and Congressional Republicans plan to cut up to \$230 billion in funding for SNAP as well as other federal nutrition aid sources to pay for tax cuts for the wealthy.³⁰ With cuts in funding, SNAP recipients, like older adults and people with disabilities, would see an immediate drop in their average daily benefit from \$6.20 per day down to \$5.00 per day to cover their nutrition needs.³¹

Additionally, President Trump and Congressional Republicans' plan for massive cuts to U.S. Department of Agriculture's workforce and program funding will affect not just SNAP but other critical nutrition programs that help older adults and people with disabilities, such as The Emergency Food Assistance Program (commodity purchases for food banks), Commodity Supplemental Food Program (monthly food packages for low-income seniors), and the Senior

Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (vouchers to low-income seniors to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables at farmers markets). This loss of funding will impact one out of every three older adults, further intensifying the food insecurity of our most vulnerable groups.³²

c. Exposing Seniors and People with Disabilities to Temperature Extremes

The Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) provides home energy assistance to help low-income households meet their home heating and cooling needs. However, the Trump administration fired every single federal worker who administers LIHEAP, leaving no one left to distribute the remaining \$378 million in funds for the upcoming summer months, let alone future funding distributions.³³ These haphazard terminations impact the sole federal program designed to assist older adults and low-income families with utility bill payment assistance or weatherization and energy-related home repairs.

d. Cutting Funds to States to Support Aging and Disability Communities

The Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) provides flexible funding for states and territories to tailor social service programming to their population's needs, such as helping older adults and people with disabilities stay in their homes or, when remaining at home is not appropriate, helping them find the best institutional arrangements. Many community-based Meals on Wheels providers depend on SSBG funding to bridge the growing shortfalls in other funding sources.³⁴ These grants also protect vulnerable populations, like the aging communities, from neglect, abuse, and exploitation. With approximately 10% of older adults and nearly 40% of people with disabilities experiencing mistreatment, these funds are vitally important.³⁵⁻³⁶ Yet, the Trump administration plans to completely eliminate SSBG and states would be hard-pressed to replace these lost funds, further exacerbating food insecurities for older adults and leaving them hungry.

e. Shattering Funds to Low-Income Families

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) is a time-limited, federally-funded block grant provided to states to support the basic needs of families and children, including older adults if they are part of the family unit, to obtain food, housing, and childcare. Additionally, the program supports nearly one in four adults with a known disability.³⁷ TANF also promotes job preparation so that families can achieve economic security and stability. President Trump's proposed budget will slash TANF by \$21 billion over ten years, leaving many parents and children unhoused and hungry with no prospect of improving their situation if they fall on hard times.³⁸ Along with cutting the amount the federal government provides to states, the budget proposal layers on new spending requirements. For instance, states will be required to spend at least 30% on work activities, work support, and childcare, impacting available funds for basic needs. Trump's budget proposal would aggressively move TANF in the wrong direction and severely harm those families in need of support through a transition period.³⁹

f. Chaos with Federal Funding

On January 27, 2025, just one week into his term, President Trump's Office of Management and Budget (OMB) released a memo directing all federal agencies to withhold funds to millions of

federally-supported entities across state and local governments, businesses, and community-based organizations.⁴⁰ Immediately after this illegal and damaging guidance was issued, essential health care providers and research entities were left scrambling to figure out how to keep their doors open and continue to provide services. For example, Community Health Centers, which provide services for nearly 32 million Americans, experienced delays in accessing their funds and some were forced to close clinics.⁴¹ Head Start programs that provide comprehensive early learning, health, nutrition, and family support services to low-income families with children from birth through age five were also left with delays in accessing their funding, resulting in some having to temporarily close their doors. Amid outcry from by many Congressional Democrats and advocacy organizations, and after an order from a federal judge, the funding freeze was halted.⁴² While the OMB memo was withdrawn, President Trump's actions wreaked havoc and the impacts of this freeze continue to ripple through the health care and public health communities.

Adding to this confusion, on February 7, 2025, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) issued guidance to impose a cap of 15% on indirect cost rates for all NIH-funded grant awards.⁴³ The NIH is the largest funder of biomedical research in the world and plays a critical role in advancing science in areas such as dementia, heart disease, and cancer. Research institutions rely on indirect costs to support their research infrastructure and the ability to conduct high-quality research. A cap on indirect cost rates for NIH-funded grants amounts to a cut in funding for research institutions. This administrative action is being reviewed by the courts but funding uncertainty is already impacting research communities across the U.S.⁴⁴ The administration has also taken efforts to roll back funding for public health initiatives, including on March 25, 2025, when President Trump announced he would rescind more than \$11 billion in state funding dedicated to support testing, vaccination, and community health workers.⁴⁵

g. Perpetuating Lies on Autism

Secretary Kennedy's long-espoused misconception that vaccines cause autism got an even louder megaphone after the Senate confirmed⁴⁶ him to direct HHS by a vote of 52-48. On April 10, 2025, HHS announced a large-scale study into the repeatedly-debunked link between vaccines and autism and hired noted antivaxxer David Geier to lead the project.⁴⁷ The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and many reputable health authorities have roundly and repeatedly concluded that vaccines do not cause autism. There is ample evidence to support this conclusion, including a meta-analysis from 2014 which concluded that vaccines are not associated with autism. Numerous studies have also shown that other vaccines, like the flu and Measles, Mumps, and Rubella (MMR) vaccines, do not cause autism.⁴⁹ These misinformed claims have been thoroughly researched and clearly disproven. And yet, on April 11, 2025, Secretary Kennedy announced that by September 2025, he will discover the cause of autism and end the "epidemic," a statement which has alarmed people and families of the autism community.⁵⁰

IV. Annihilating Education

On March 20, 2025, President Trump signed an executive order to begin dismantling ED and plans to move the implementation and oversight of special education to HHS.⁵¹⁻⁵² Closing the Department would harm nearly 9.5 million students with disabilities and their families.⁵³ Even

putting aside the significant reorganization and reduction in workforce efforts at HHS that will decrease its capacity, HHS is neither equipped nor designed to manage the educational needs and civil rights protections of students with disabilities. Such protections have been further threatened by the termination of at least 243 employees of 550 in the Department's Office for Civil Rights.⁵⁴

Administered by ED, the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA) mandates that children with disabilities receive a free appropriate public education tailored to their individual needs. The Department distributes grants, issues guidelines, and monitors state implementation to ensure students with disabilities have equal opportunities to succeed and thrive. When IDEA was created, it promised to fund 40% of special education costs.⁵⁵ However, that commitment has never been fulfilled despite Democratic calls for increased funding. Today, federal funding is under 13%, forcing states and local districts to cover the gap. This continued underfunding, paired with the proposed dismantling of the very agency responsible for ensuring equity and accountability, underscores the devastating consequences of such an executive order and reinforces just how vital ED remains in protecting the rights of students with disabilities.

a. Losing Quality Educators

The Trump administration terminated over \$600 million in educator preparation grants. The Teacher Quality Partnership (TQP), Supporting Effective Educator Development (SEED), and Teacher and School Leader (TSL) Incentive Fund were bipartisan efforts to ensure every student has access to quality educators.⁵⁶ The cancellation of these grants comes as our country faces dire teacher shortages—51% of public schools nationwide reported needing to fill special education positions before the start of this school year, the most of any teacher specialty.⁵⁷ In March, a federal judge ordered ED to reinstate all the grant awards; however, the United States Supreme Court issued an emergency appeal limiting \$65 million in grants to eight states.

b. Stripping Funding for Students with Disabilities

On February 14, 2025, the ED issued a “Dear Colleague” letter giving schools just 14 days to dismantle their diversity initiatives or risk losing federal funding.⁵⁸ Then on April 3, 2025, the pressure intensified as the Department sent a follow-up letter to State Education Agencies (SEAs) demanding they sign an Anti-Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) Loyalty Pledge.⁵⁹ The K-12 school districts that refused to sign this ambiguous and unnecessary letter could lose critical support, such as IDEA funds for students with disabilities and Title I funds, which bolster low-income schools. While a preliminary injunction was issued on April 24, 2025 blocking the enforcement of the certification requirement, the Trump administration has shown it will do anything to use access and equity as bargaining chips in a political power play.⁶⁰

c. Halting Research on Best Practices for Education & Training

On February 10, 2025, the Trump administration ordered the termination of at least 90 contracts totaling \$881 million at the Institute of Education Sciences (IES).⁶¹ This Institute serves as ED's independent research arm. As a result, vital programs like adult education, Title I pilots, teacher residencies, transition supports for youth with disabilities, and mental health services in schools

are no longer being evaluated to improve outcomes. This undermines evidence-based decision-making, halts vital assessments of federal education programs, and prevents access to essential data on student performance, educational outcomes, and program effectiveness. One program terminated under IES, the Charting My Path for Future Success, supported the successful transition from high school to college or the workforce for about 1,600 high school juniors in 13 school districts across the country.⁶² The Trump administration's decision to cut off vital support leaves these students without the resources they need to successfully contribute to their communities and local economies.

V. Undermining Access to Social Security

Nearly 70 million retired and disabled Americans depend on Social Security benefits and the Social Security Administration (SSA) has been an early target of the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE).⁶³ Massive layoffs, field office closures, and rewriting of the rules protecting applicants and beneficiaries will have a significant and negative impact on Americans' ability to access their earned retirement, survivor, and disability benefits.

a. Failing to Protect Earned Benefits

The Trump administration is working to fire thousands of SSA staff and close dozens of field offices. Americans often need to reach out to SSA or visit a field office to have administrative issues fixed, get questions answered, or fix errors in benefits. Mass layoffs and field office closures will make it harder for Americans to have these issues resolved and will lead to many Americans not receiving the benefits they have earned in a timely and accurate way.

The administration also announced a policy change that would require most Americans to go in-person to a field office to file for Social Security benefit, despite strong evidence that filing over the phone is a safe and easy way for Americans to start receiving the benefits they have earned.⁶⁴ After strong pushback and concerns that many applicants, particularly those with disabilities and those in rural areas, do not have easy access to field offices, the Trump administration largely walked back this ill-advised policy.⁶⁵

b. Putting Sensitive Information at Risk

The Trump administration has also worked to hand over Americans' personal Social Security data to unvetted DOGE employees. SSA's individual records contain information such as addresses, bank information, employment history, and other data that could easily be used to commit fraud or identity theft if it gets in the wrong hands. These actions put tens of millions of Americans at significant financial risk.

VI. Destruction of Civil Rights

a. Restricting Accessibility for Deaf Communities

While pillars of disability rights laws remain intact, the *Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990* (ADA) and the *Rehabilitation Act of 1973* (Rehab Act), the Trump administration has not held back on chipping away at the fundamental rights of people with disabilities. On day one, the White House removed all accessibility information and content on American Sign Language (ASL) from its website, as well as two crucial memoranda from the OMB on web accessibility compliance under Section 508 of the Rehab Act.⁶⁶⁻⁶⁷ Such steps set the tone for this administration isolating 11 million Deaf people from daily White House communications and harming accessibility standards across the federal government.

b. Dismantling Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, & Accessibility

President Trump's steps to weaponize diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) continued through an executive action on his first day in office, directing agencies to dismantle DEIA programming, affinity groups, and special emphasis programs with only a nod to the bare minimum requirements under the Rehab Act.⁶⁸ The Department of Justice rescinded 11 ADA guidance documents on accessibility in businesses, hotels, and gas stations regarding service animals and more.⁶⁹ These served as critical resources for the public to maintain compliance with the law and ensure that people with disabilities have full access to participate in our society. While President Trump does not have the authority to upend civil rights laws, these actions are alarming and threaten the lives of 61 million Americans with disabilities.

c. Making Housing Unsafe and Unaffordable

For more than half a century, it has been illegal to discriminate against Americans on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, familial status, or disability when it comes to the sale, rental, or financing of housing. Enforcement of the *Fair Housing Act* is a joint effort by federal, state, and local entities. Tens of thousands of complaints are filed and investigated each year, giving Americans recourse if they are denied access to safe and affordable housing on the basis of illegal discrimination. Unfortunately, the Trump administration has attempted to cancel dozens of fair housing enforcement contracts and is proposing to lay off three-quarters of the staff at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity, which is in charge of HUD's efforts to combat housing discrimination.⁷⁰ These actions will undermine the vital housing protections that our nation's seniors and disabled individuals have relied on for decades.

VII. Conclusion – Bulldozing Through the Next Four Years

Every senior and person with a disability deserves access to the supports they need to allow them to live with dignity. Yet President Trump has proven that he cannot be trusted with the safety and well-being of our most vulnerable Americans. The President's deliberate and systematic dismantling of America's social safety net and most popular government services will leave tens of millions of seniors and people with disabilities with nowhere to turn for the support they desperately need. This is unacceptable and the drafters of this report will continue to oppose any actions by President Trump that harm seniors and people with disabilities.

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Appendix – Reduction in Force by Department

Source: HHS Briefing - Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee, Thursday, April 10, 2025. Washington, DC.

Agency	Abbreviation	Number of Employees Cut
Administration for Children and Families	ACF	467
Administration for Community Living	ACL	90
Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality	AHRC	123
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention	CDC	2,473
Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services	CMS	322
Health Resources and Services Administration	HRSA	400
National Institutes of Health	NIH	1,312
Office of the Secretary	OS	516
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration	SAMSHA	197
Food and Drug Administration	FDA	2,519
TOTAL		8,419 employees