



July 29, 2026

Senator Tim Kaine
231 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Senator Susan Collins
413 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Senator Lisa Murkowski
522 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senators Kaine, Collins, and Murkowski:

The National Down Syndrome Society (NDSS) works to create a world where individuals with Down syndrome thrive. We write today in strong support of S. 5046, which would prohibit the transfer of certain offices and functions of the Department of Education to other federal agencies, including the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS).

NDSS opposes any efforts to abolish or undermine the Department of Education and its work to ensure a free, appropriate public education without discrimination for students with Down syndrome and other disabilities, as required under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and other federal civil rights laws. The Administration's recently announced interagency agreements have created uncertainty about how federal special education laws will be implemented and enforced, putting critical protections and supports for students with disabilities at risk.

The Department of Education and its staff have the necessary institutional knowledge, experience, and responsibility to ensure students with disabilities have access to high-quality special education services and protections guaranteed under federal law. We firmly believe that OSERS must remain fully staffed and functional within the Department to preserve that mission. We thank you for your leadership on this issue and appreciate the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee's decision to swiftly schedule S. 5046 for markup. We urge Congress to act quickly to preserve federal special education protections by passing legislation that ensures OSERS remains within the Department of Education, and NDSS stands ready to work with you and the Committee to achieve that goal.



Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kandi Pickard". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, looping "O" at the end.

Kandi Pickard
CEO
National Down Syndrome Society

CC: Members of the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions