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NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 6, 2025

AG Kaul Joins Lawsuit Challenging Termination of K-12 Teacher Preparation Pipeline Grants

More than \$3 million in funding at stake for Wisconsin programs that address state's ongoing teacher shortage

MADISON – Attorney General Josh Kaul today joined a multistate coalition in filing a [lawsuit](#) challenging the Trump Administration's unlawful termination of grant funding for K-12 teacher preparation programs. Beginning on February 7, the University of Wisconsin-Madison received a letter purporting to terminate more than \$3 million in critical funding to address the state's ongoing teacher shortage through teacher preparation programs. These programs are designed to create a pipeline for teachers serving rural and urban communities and teaching harder-to-fill positions like math and science and have been shown to increase teacher retention rates and ensure that educators remain in the profession beyond the crucial first five years. The attorneys general argue that the terminations, impacting institutions across the nation, which were issued without warning and with immediate effect, violate the Administrative Procedure Act. The attorneys general are seeking a temporary restraining order to prevent disruptions to these programs, which would immediately reduce the number of teachers and teacher trainees serving in schools.

“As this case shows, wildly cutting grant funding without any serious deliberation has real-world consequences,” said AG Kaul. “The court should step in and put a halt to the Trump administration's attempt to eliminate this grant funding that's helping to address the teacher shortage.”

In 2024, more than 400,000 teaching positions in the U.S. — representing about one in eight of all teaching positions nationwide — were vacant or filled by uncertified teachers. When schools are unable to find qualified teachers, students suffer. Teacher shortages can result in larger class sizes, cancelled courses, or classes staffed with teachers less able to teach a subject.

To address the nationwide teacher shortage, especially for hard-to-fill subject areas, like math, science, and special education, and in hard-to-staff school districts in rural and urban areas, Congress established and allocated funding pursuant to the Teacher Quality Partnership and Supporting Effective Educator Development grant programs to train teachers, create a new teacher pipeline, and improve teacher quality. The U.S. Department of Education subsequently awarded and obligated funds to states' public universities and associated nonprofits grants under these programs to do exactly what Congress mandated — provide teacher training, placement, and retention, and new teacher pipeline development in the states.

Beginning on February 7, 2025, the Department of Education terminated, with immediate effect, grants awarded to K-12 teacher preparation programs in Wisconsin and nationwide. Hundreds of millions in grants have been terminated. In Wisconsin alone, the Department provided notice of termination of more than \$3 million in funding. These terminations would be felt immediately in Wisconsin schools who rely on these programs to bring teachers into their classrooms. The terminations would also cause layoffs or reductions in hours for university staff, and result in reduced or eliminated support and funding for new and aspiring teachers.

In Wisconsin, the University of Wisconsin-Madison received a five-year TQP grant for approximately \$3.3 million in 2023 to create a teacher residency program that was projected to train 36 highly qualified special education teachers in the Milwaukee Public Schools.

Milwaukee Public Schools, the largest public school district in Wisconsin, suffers from a critical shortage of qualified special education teachers, with approximately 100 positions currently vacant. The program was projected to train special education teachers chosen through a rigorous recruitment and selection process, pairing these teachers with experienced mentors and providing them with extensive graduate coursework in special education along with a year of field experience.

Each of these teachers would then have been committed to work in Milwaukee Public Schools for at least three years. At the time of the grant's termination, the first cohort of 10 individuals was serving as teacher residents in Milwaukee Public Schools and taking graduate coursework. Eight more individuals had already been accepted into the second cohort, with eight more applications having been submitted or in progress.

Attorney General Kaul joins the attorneys general of California, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Colorado, Illinois, Maryland, and New York, in filing the lawsuit.

A copy of the lawsuit is available [here](#).