

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

August 4, 2023

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

Dear Secretary Cardona,

We are writing to express my extreme opposition to a Department of Education decision to block federal funds for Montana schools' hunting safety and archery programs.¹ This decision is yet another example of the Department being weaponized against the American people. This decision will have a detrimental impact on the millions of children enrolled in school archery and hunting safety programs. There is no excuse for the Department to misinterpret legislation in order to advance a progressive agenda at the expense of Montanans and their way of life.

Despite our strong objections, President Biden signed into law the so-called Bipartisan Safer Communities Act.² The legislation incentivized unconstitutional Red Flag laws, impeded access to Second Amendment rights, and did nothing to prevent mass shootings or crime. There was also a provision in the legislation that prohibits funds from being used to provide people with a dangerous weapon or to provide "training in the use of a dangerous weapon." The Department is deliberately misinterpreting the statute to insinuate that hunting safety and archery courses are dangerous and should not exist in schools. This provision, or better yet, the whole Bipartisan Safer Communities Act needs to be repealed. At the very least, the Department should be able to understand that teaching hunter safety in a state where many people regularly hunt is not "training in the use of a dangerous weapon"—teaching hunter safety and archery in schools saves lives, it does not endanger them.

In Montana alone, the Department awarded \$4.8 million through the Stronger Connections Grant Program, which has already been disbursed to 25 school districts. These funds now must be withheld if archery or a hunting safety program is offered. This Administration's rabid hatred of the Second Amendment is creating unnecessary confusion and harming the children of Montana. Archery teaches children focus, self-control, discipline, patience, and the life lessons required to be successful in school and throughout life.³ Hunting is a way of life in Montana, as it promotes conservation, stimulates the local economy, helps feed our population, and builds strong family bonds among others. Teaching children how to hunt safely is basic common sense and would reduce accidental tragedies, which you claim to care about. Moreover, disbursing the funds prior

¹ <https://www.foxnews.com/politics/biden-admin-withholding-key-funding-schools-hunting-archery-programs>

² <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/senate-bill/2938/text>

³ <https://www.naspschools.org/what-is-nasp/>

to stipulating that they cannot be used for programs that the Department was aware of is a blatant attempt to end these programs. President Biden's Department of Education is acting unethically by disbursing funds and then threatening to rescind them if Montana schools don't comply with an anti-conservative and anti-American agenda.

The Department pretends that using school facilities to house adult illegal immigrants or teach transgenderism to elementary students is not a safety concern yet finds teaching hunting safety and archery in a rural state dangerous. This is disgraceful but unfortunately not shocking. You must immediately reverse course and allow schools to offer hunting safety and archery programs. We do not trust that you would do this on your own accord and plan on introducing legislation soon. The American people are sick of a woke, weaponized Department that actively harms their children's education.

Sincerely,



Matthew M. Rosendale, Sr.
Member of Congress



Mary Miller
Member of Congress



Lauren Boebert
Member of Congress