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“A RECKLESS DECISION”: DISABILITY RIGHTS ADVOCATES ISSUE URGENT CALL TO ACTION AS FEDS DISMANTLE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

DENVER, CO — Disability Law Colorado (DLC) today called on state and federal leaders to protect the rights of students with disabilities from what it described as “a reckless decision.” DLC’s call to action came as the U.S. Department of Education slashed its workforce in half — the first step toward what Education Secretary Linda McMahon vowed to be the end of her agency.

“Students with disabilities already face immense barriers in accessing quality education,” said DLC Co-Legal Director Emily Harvey. “Eliminating the very agency responsible for protecting their rights could produce devastating consequences: more isolation, fewer services, and increased discrimination. That’s unacceptable.”

DLC denounced the Administration’s decision as a threat to the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. DLC also pledged to strengthen enforcement efforts at the state level, where the Colorado Anti-Discrimination Act, the Exceptional Children’s Educational Act, and the Protection of Persons from Restraint Act provide similar safeguards.

Harvey said that shutting down the Department of Education would not only jeopardize the enforcement of civil rights laws but also widen the gaps in teacher training and student support. “Without proper oversight,” Harvey added, “schools are less likely to follow the law and more likely to engage in suspensions, expulsions, informal removals, restrictive placements, seclusion, and restraint.”

As Colorado’s leading advocates for disability justice, DLC promised to hold public officials accountable. “We’ll do everything we can to shield students from this reckless decision,” said DLC Executive Director Andrew Romanoff. “The future of inclusive education — in Colorado and across the country — hangs in the balance.”

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Disability Law Colorado is a nonprofit civil rights organization, authorized by federal law to combat discrimination, abuse, and neglect. We aim to make Colorado the best place in America for people with disabilities to work and thrive. For more information, visit disabilitylawco.org.