



CWLA and AAICAMA Policy Update

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February 2025/The First 100 Days: *What's Happening, What to Expect*

Link: [CWLA Policy Update Slides](#)

The Administration: *Executive Orders*. Starting on January 20th, the President has issued a number of Executive Orders (EOs); many of these EOs were signed on the first day in office, more than any President in American history. The EOs cover a range of topics and issues, including Cabinet and Sub-Cabinet nominations, removing the United States from the World Health Organization, rescinding past Biden-era EOs, renaming landmarks, commuting the sentences of person convicted in the January 6th insurrection, and delaying the TikTok ban. Some of the significant topic areas have been:

Immigration. There have been many immigration EOs, covering a wide range of policy changes. These orders focus on mass deportation, suspending refugee resettlement, declaring a national emergency at the southern border, threatening penalties for “sanctuary” cities and localities, turning away unaccompanied children, and opening Guantanamo Bay to hold migrants.

Significant Executive Orders include:

- **Ending birthright citizenship.** The President ordered an end to birthright citizenship, meaning that only children born in the USA to parents with legal status would be considered citizens. This order has been challenged in court and indefinitely stopped. It will likely go to the Supreme Court.
- **Ending the Protected Areas Directive.** On January 20, 2025, the Trump Administration **rescinded a Biden-era policy** that protected certain locations—such as churches, school, and hospitals—from immigration enforcement, replacing it with an unreleased directive that gives ICE agents unbridled power to take enforcement actions in any of these spaces using so-called “common sense.” This has led to individuals and parents forgoing services that they and/or their children need.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. The White House has released two EOs on DEI:

- **Reforming the Federal Hiring Process and Restoring Merit To Government Service.** This EO ends federal hiring practices that take diversity and equity into account and deems these practices “illegal discrimination.” This has been challenged in court as well.
- **Ending Radical And Wasteful Government DEI Programs And Preferencing.** This EO ends federally funded DEIA programs, calls them “illegal and immoral discrimination programs.” The EO extends to federally funded grants, research, nonprofits, and private philanthropy.

Education. An EO on dismantling the Department of Education is expected. To date, there have been two EOs on education:

- [Ending Radical Indoctrination in K-12 Schooling](#). This order instructs the promotion of "patriotic education" and threatens to take away all federal funding from schools and districts that teach "discriminatory equity ideology"
- [Expanding Educational Freedom and Opportunity for Families](#) – this promotes school choice, including use of block grant funding, like CCDBG (child care and early ed), for faith-based education programs
- [Anti-Transgender Ideology](#). These orders are attacks on trans people, including children and youth:
- [Keeping Men Out of Women's Sports](#) - Bans trans girls/women from participating in women's sports and threatens to rescind funding for violators
- [Defending Women and Restoring Biological Truth](#) - Declares only two sexes will be recognized, and they are not interchangeable
- [Protecting Children from Chemical and Surgical Mutilation](#) - Bans gender affirming care for children, includes 18 year olds in the definition. This has been challenged in court.

Other EOs that we have followed are:

- [Establishing the Make America Healthy Again Commission](#) – this order followed the confirmation of RFK, Jr., and would focus on chronic disease.
- [Reviewing Funding for Nongovernment Organizations \(NGOs\)](#) – this order directs agencies to review funds that go to nonprofits to make sure the objectives are in line with the Administration's priorities.
- [Trump administration halts support for representing unaccompanied children in immigration court](#) – this action took away legal representation for unaccompanied children, but was reversed in just two days due to public outcry.

Here are two helpful tracking resources:

- [Trump Executive Order Tracker | Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP](#)
- [Litigation Tracker: Legal Challenges to Trump Administration Actions](#)

Federal Funding Freeze: On Monday, January 27, 2025, a White House memo announced a complete freeze of funding for [hundreds of social service programs](#), cutting off federal funding for Head Start, health care, child welfare, meals for seniors, and much more.

A court order on Tuesday immediately blocked the freeze temporarily, and the White House [withdrew its memo](#) after significant public outcry; 23 Attorneys General [filed a lawsuit](#), and several Republican lawmakers [spoke out](#) about the impact of this decision. Additional court rulings further blocked the funding freeze, permanently ordering the Administration to distribute funding as it has been directed by Congress.

The White House Press Secretary [indicated](#) that while the memo had been rescinded, there is still an effort underway to stop federal funding for programs that do not align with the new Administration's priorities and are in direct opposition to [recent Executive Orders](#) (EOs). There was an additional EO later that directed federal agencies to review all NGO funding. While the EO did not direct them to withhold funding from projects that are in opposition to the Administration, it strongly implies that is intention and the direction in which we are heading.

Thanks to collective advocacy and outcry, most children and families- for now- will be able to access vital services to meet their needs. However, many children, youth, and parents are impacted by the EOs – programs serving LGBTQIA+ youth and parents are losing grant funding, young adults with lived experience are losing contract work, and tribal programs are in danger of losing funds to support their missions. The immigration EOs will have a chilling effect on immigrants utilizing programs and services.

Note: Under the US Constitution, federal law, and court precedent, the White House- the President of the United States- does not have the authority to withhold, or [impound](#), appropriated funds indefinitely. Under the Constitution, only Congress is authorized to make federal appropriations.

Congress: Budget Reconciliation. Created in the 1970s, the reconciliation process is meant to address the national deficit. Because a reconciliation bill is not subject to the Senate filibuster, it can pass the Senate with 51 votes, making it an easier vehicle for the Majority party to pass their budgetary priorities. Speaker Johnson has [stated](#) that he hopes to have a budget blueprint by the end of February, which is a first step in the reconciliation process. It is expected that the reconciliation package would focus on immigration spending and extending the tax cuts of 2017, with major cuts to human services and climate change initiatives offsetting these costs.

The Majority party has laid out a list of [spending reform options](#) that would slash federal spending on programs that provide vital support to millions of Americans.

On February 7, 2025, Senate Budget Committee Chairman Lindsay Graham (R-SC) [announced](#) a Senate Budget Resolution, which is the first step in the budget reconciliation process. The press release declared that the reconciliation package would “secure the border, revitalize our military, unleash American energy production and begin the process of restoring fiscal sanity.” The press release links to the text of the resolution and fiscal tables to put numbers to the spending increases and cuts.

According to the press release, this border, security and energy package will be smaller in scope than the plan currently being negotiated by the House majority caucus; it would focus on these key areas. Border funding would be spent on the border wall, detention and deportation efforts and investments in Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and law enforcement for immigration enforcement activities. It would significantly increase funding for the Department of Defense to grow and strengthen the military. The package would also roll back environmental protections in energy pursuit and use. Although the press release includes text of the budget resolution and budget tables, it is purposely unclear how they will pay for these initiatives, beyond stating that they will be paid for entirely: “The bill’s projected increased annual spending of \$85.5 billion will be paid for by a projected \$85.5 billion in reduced annual spending.”

In previous reporting, Senator Graham noted that entitlement cuts were being considered to fund this bill. The plan directs four committees in the Senate, including those with jurisdiction over Medicaid, SNAP, student loans, and certain energy resilience programs, to make cuts totaling at least \$1 billion each, far less than is needed to offset the \$85.5 billion total increase in spending. The committees will be encouraged to pursue savings far beyond the numbers noted here.

Previous reporting noted that Senator Graham did not rule out cuts to entitlements to fund the programs and efforts detailed in his press release. The House Budget Committee menu of spending reforms highlights a number of possible cuts on the table, including major changes to Medicaid to take healthcare away from people through work requirements, per capita caps, block grants, and other means. Cuts to other major entitlement programs, like SNAP, TANF and SSBG, are all on the list as well.

On Wednesday, February 12, 2025, the House Majority party introduced [a budget plan](#) that would tackle the President’s agenda in one big reconciliation bill that will cut more than \$4 trillion in taxes, increase the defense budget, fund mass deportations and other immigration initiatives, and make huge cuts to healthcare, food assistance, and other important human services. The House Budget Committee [passed the resolution out of committee](#) on February 13th.

The House Budget directs several Committees to devise at least \$1.5 trillion in cuts between Fiscal Years 2025-2034 and introduces \$4.8 trillion in new spending. The Resolution also states that the goal is to make at least \$2 trillion in cuts—and if they can't manage it, the amount that the Ways and Means Committee can spend on tax cuts will drop commensurately. This budget would also *raise the debt limit by \$4 trillion*, a proposal that is unpopular with the House Freedom Caucus and is likely to make the eventual reconciliation bill much harder to pass.

This House Budget Resolution makes much larger cuts than the Senate resolution (\$1.5 trillion in the House, at least \$4 billion in the Senate) and it spends significantly more money as well (\$4.8 trillion vs. \$521 billion). Here's where the majority of cuts are targeted to come from:

- **Medicaid.** The budget directs the House Energy and Commerce Committee, which has jurisdiction over Medicaid, to make at least \$880 billion in cuts. With Medicare declared to be off the table, these cuts will entirely or almost entirely come from Medicaid, which provides health care to more than 70 million Americans, including nearly all children and youth in or from foster care. Leaders have proposed work requirements and limiting the amount of money each state receives via per capita caps, explained [here](#).
- **SNAP.** The House budget directs the Agriculture Committee, which has control over the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), to make \$230 billion in cuts. More than 40 million people rely on SNAP benefits. Again, stricter work requirements have been proposed to reduce SNAP spending.
- **Other safety net programs.** The **Social Services Block Grant (SSBG)** continues to be in jeopardy, as it was listed among the House Budget Committee's menu of spending reforms. SSBG is a flexible grant that funds services for children, families, individuals with disabilities and older adults.

The House is out on recess this week and will return next week, when the full chamber is expected to vote on the budget resolution; however, [the Hill has reported](#) that the budget is already in jeopardy, as House moderates are pushing back on the proposed cuts to safety net programs, particularly Medicaid. "There's at least double digits of people who are severely concerned," Representative Valadao (R-CA) is quoted in the article saying. "And I think as people start to understand the specifics of how it's going to affect their districts, I imagine that number grows."

With razor thin margins, the majority party can only lose a single vote on the bill if all members are present, so any single moderate could stop the budget from being passed. The House leaders would then have to go back to the drawing board, coming up with another plan.

Appropriations: In addition to a reconciliation package, Congress will also need to address Appropriations by March 14th, the new deadline set in the Continuing Resolution last Congress. There have been no new developments regarding the topline spending levels for an FY 2025 budget at this time.

Other Policy Updates: There has been some small advancements of child welfare policy on the Hill, marking some bipartisan effort to continue making progress:

- Recruiting Families Using Data Act reintroduced
 - Requires states to track data related to recruitment and retention of resource parents
 - States must create a Family Partnership Plan, including the participation and involvement of people with lived experience.
- AI/AN CAPTA
 - Senators Murkowski (R-AK) and Warren (D-MA) will introduce soon
 - Increases set aside in CAPTA/CBCAP for tribal child welfare programs