



# Speak Out Now

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## These Attacks are Meant to Stop Us. We Can't Let Them!

Announcement after announcement about planned executive orders have been filling up our news feeds in the first two weeks of Donald Trump's second presidential term. From education to healthcare to food access to queer, trans, and immigrant rights, Trump's administration has asserted plans to cut federal support for programs that many of us rely on. Due to public outrage, Trump rescinded his plan to freeze all federal funding. But the intended damage has already been done through disruption, fear, and division.

Trump used the horrific plane crash over D.C. to attack Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) programs, which had nothing to do with the tragedy. Trump is using the loss of lives to push forward confusion and anger. In fact, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has long struggled with staffing and requires highly trained operators to function. Trump's promises to cut funding and fire federal employees has only further disrupted the functioning of the FAA and other important sectors that keep our society running.

Two emails were sent to all federal employees, urging them to quit and move to the private sector, implying that they may otherwise be fired. The Trump Administration's agenda, following the far-right's blueprint, is threatening the jobs of over three million people that carry our mail, do medical research, regulate food safety, and much more.

The Democratic Party has paved the way for these attacks through their policies and consistent inaction. Now, some Democratic officials are rightfully speaking out against cuts to funding. But their party's actions, past and present, had little to do with winning the rights that have come under attack.

Most of the services the government provides that directly impact our lives have been won by public pressure, not through the concerns of those holding political power. This was also true when people spoke out against the recent attacks. It wasn't the Democrats' first response. They only responded when they saw the outpouring of anger across the country.

This is the way their political system works. We are supposed to believe that voting for candidates of the two parties that represent the rich and powerful will get us what we need, and that we just have to choose the right one. The reality is that it has always been regular people that have come together and demanded changes. That has resulted in programs like SNAP food stamps, education and health subsidies, the Civil Rights Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and abortion protections. It was our mass movements that led to these changes. The politicians were forced to create them as concessions to keep our power at bay.

So why are we facing these threats to cut support to programs and services that we use and need most? The Trump administration claims they are cutting things in the name of "efficiency" and cutting "waste", when in reality, these are the parts of the government that are most important and valuable for us. We face cuts in essential programs while the rich get cuts to their taxes. And our tax dollars flow into their government without our choice about what that money will fund.

They will cut programs they were forced to give us whenever they get the opportunity – so long as we aren't threatening to push back. And that is exactly what we must do – push back!

We have the numbers and the forces to say that we will not allow these attacks, but we are currently out-organized. We can't make this government work for us, but just as in the past, we can win the rights we deserve, and beyond – but only with a concerted, collective effort. We can't rely on the courts to protect us or wait for the next elections.

Our time is now! Wherever we are, we can talk with people we know about the need to take action. We can join with others to defend people who are facing deportation or speak out at meetings. Figuring out what to do becomes easier when we are doing it with others. What happens next is up to us.