



santa clara county ★★
DEMOCRATIC PARTY
the democratic party of silicon valley

How Trump is hurting our county's youth



Photo by [Ronald Felton](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Hard-working families in Santa Clara County are under siege by the Trump administration. We do not have the time or space to catalog all these threats here. Instead we ask you to follow along as we shine a spotlight on how our county's students will be hurt, and how one young person has chosen to engage: if 16-year-old Maddy Chang has reason to hope, so do we.

How our county's pre-schoolers will be hurt

The Trump administration is reversing decades of federal policy to [exclude undocumented children from Head Start programs](#). It has reclassified Head Start as a benefit that requires proof of legal immigration status. This is in direct conflict with California state law, which bars public education programs from asking families for such proof, requiring only proof of residency.

Federally funded Head Start programs promote school readiness for low-income children from birth to age five, providing wrap-around services that include early childhood education, health screenings, and family support.

The Trump administration has threatened Head Start programs that don't screen for immigration status with a complete loss of funding.

The Santa Clara Office of Education, which administers Head Start in Santa Clara and San Benito counties, now must choose between compliance with the federal government and its longstanding principle of inclusion. At risk locally is

\$38 million in annual funding, which serves more than 1,200 low-income children and families in our area.

So once again, in the name of immigration reform, this administration is going after the most vulnerable among us.

In our county, Head Start's only hope is if advocacy groups or state agencies sue to block the new rule, or if California moves to serve excluded children by increasing funding to state-level early learning programs like California State Preschool Program (CSPP).

How our county's public school students will be hurt

[Earlier this month](#), the Trump administration accused public schools of using more than \$6 billion in federal education grants to promote a "a radical leftwing agenda."

The administration froze these grants, putting after-school and summer programs, English language instruction, and other services earmarked for low-income and immigrant students in jeopardy this fall.

Almost immediately, a coalition of 24 states and the District of Columbia sued the administration over this freeze. Meanwhile, the programs remain in jeopardy.

How our county's college students will be hurt

Due to this administration's actions, [the cost of college will soar](#). Under the Big Ugly Bill (we refuse to call this bill by its cruelly deceptive name), the noose has been tightened around the federal student loan program, which for so long has been a bedrock of our country's promise of opportunity for all.

The Big Ugly Bill restricts how much college students can borrow from the federal government and requires them to pay back faster. It increases taxes on college endowments, which decreases the amount colleges have available for student aid. And it narrows access to the Pell Grants that benefit the most financially needy students.

These cuts hit low-income students and future public servants—teachers, social workers, and more—the hardest. They magnify the hurdles of accessing higher education and managing lifelong debt.

How Maddy Chang has chosen to engage

On July 10, when more than a dozen teen Democrats commandeered our Central Committee meeting for our annual [Youth Takeover](#), sixteen-year-old Maddy Chang chaired the debates on ten bills—from free menstrual products to environmental measures.

An SCCDP intern who starts her junior year at San Jose's Lynbrook High School this fall, Maddy worked tirelessly on managing outreach and advertising for this year's Takeover.



Maddy participated in last year's Takeover, and was so empowered by it that she applied to intern with the SCCDP so she could help organize this year's event.

She is certain that events such as the Youth Takeover show students the immense power they have to create change, a power even more crucial in a political climate where youth are targeted. She urges future participants to

Speak boldly and assert their ideas.

As in years past, the bills Maddy and the other Youth Takeover students passed went before our Central Committee for their approval, and could possibly advance to the national party level — showing how activism drives real policy change.

Actions to Take

- Attend SCCDP’s annual Victory Brunch on Sept. 14. Get tickets and information [here](#). Place ads in the program [here](#)
- [Canvass](#) on weekends in Ceres to help re-elect Rep. Adam Gray, who won his seat in 2024 by just 187 votes
- [Phonebank](#) on Thursday evenings into CA House districts represented by Republicans who voted to cut healthcare
- [Call](#) into Virginia on Wednesday afternoons to help put Democrats in power in the statehouse

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Santa Clara County Democratic Party | 2901 Moorpark Avenue Suite 110 | San Jose, CA 95128
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