



News Release

Comptroller Brooke Lierman Urges HHS to Withdraw Proposal Threatening Head Start

Comptroller warns that the proposed changes would threaten early childhood education and lead to higher childcare costs for Maryland families

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (October 7, 2026) — **Comptroller Brooke E. Lierman** yesterday submitted a public comment to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) urging the department to withdraw its proposed rescission of the federal Head Start Program, warning that the proposal would weaken protections for children, reduce support for early childhood educators, and increase childcare costs for Maryland families.

“Head Start provides critical early learning opportunities for children while helping working families access reliable, affordable childcare,” said **Comptroller Brooke E. Lierman**. “At a time when families are already struggling with rising costs, we should be expanding access to these essential services, not making it harder for children to receive high-quality early education and for working parents to find affordable childcare. I call on the Department of Health and Human Services to withdraw this proposal and work with states to strengthen these programs.”

According to 2025 data, more than 7,500 Maryland children are enrolled in Head Start programs across 171 active centers, supported by an estimated \$135 million in federal funding.

In her formal comments to HHS Secretary Kennedy, Comptroller Lierman argued that the proposal would weaken classroom standards, eliminate key health screenings, reduce educator support, and shorten program hours. She also warned that these changes would ultimately leave parents with fewer affordable childcare options, forcing them to pay more for care or reduce their working hours.

The Comptroller urged HHS to focus instead on efforts that support young children's development, preserve the programs that protect families, and keep childcare costs down.

[Read Comptroller Lierman's full comments.](#)

###

Media Contacts

Jeremy Ames

james@marylandtaxes.gov

443-336-8162 (cell)

Bruce Nilson

bnilson@marylandtaxes.gov

443-254-6153 (cell)

Comptroller of Maryland, 80 Calvert Street, Annapolis, Maryland 21401, United States