

Facts about The Current State of Our Democracy

Gathered by the **Willits Indivisible** Fact Finders Group, Fact Sheet #1 3/28/25)

Threats to and False Information about the Social Security Administration (SSA)

Facts: The SSA plans to cut up to 12% of its workforce; 6 out of 10 regional SSA offices and 40 field offices will be closed. New online and in-person applications will take effect March 31, 2025. Families with children applying for benefits must visit in person. The change can make it more difficult for older and disabled beneficiaries, getting into an office or struggling with online services.

Source: *New York Times* Mar. 20, 2025, p. B3, by Tara Siegel Bernard

Facts: Elon Musk (of Trump's "DOGE") falsely implied that nearly 19 million centenarians were receiving SSA benefits. In fact, just 44,000 were earning checks, with just 13 of those listed as age 112 or older. Musk is confusing the SS numbers "on file" with those actually collecting benefits.

Source: *Newsweek* <https://www.newsweek.com/social-security-over-100-payments-elon-musk-claims-2032774>

Trump's Tax Cuts – Actually for the Rich:

Facts: Trump's plans to lift limits for State and Local Tax (SALT) deductions would save the richest 0.1% of Americans an estimated \$140,000 *each* per year. Those making over \$430,000 would receive nearly 3/4 of the benefit, while households making about \$63,000 or less would get *no* tax cut on average. The average tax cut for households making \$63,000 to \$113,000 would be \$30. The average household income in Mendocino County is \$64,688.

Source: Urban Brookings Tax Policy Center (nonpartisan): taxpolicycenter.org/ and <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/mendocinocalifornia/BZA010222>

Medicaid Funding Threats

Facts: The Senate-passed federal budget, signed by Trump, directs \$880 billion in spending cuts over the next 10 years, which would largely have to come from Medicaid (known as Medi-Cal in CA). California could lose \$10 billion to \$20 billion a year: Medi-Cal covers 14.9 million people—1 in 3; half of all children; 40% of all births; and long-term services for seniors and disabled people. Medicaid is especially crucial in rural areas or communities with high poverty rates. Medi-Cal enrollment in Mendocino County is 47% of our population

Source: <https://calbudgetcenter.org/resources/qa-understanding-medi-cal-coverage-funding-and-the-threat-of-federal-cuts/>, CAL Matters (a nonpartisan and nonprofit news organization), 2/28/25 & CA Dept of Health Care Services, 2/3/25.

Reductions in Federal Funding to Agencies That Employ Locally

Facts: The Bureau of Land Management Ukiah Field Office is to close by August 31, by order of DOGE. Areas of Mendocino County will be affected, including around Pt. Arena Lighthouse and Cow Mountain. Wide-ranging impacts from lack of supervision can leave wilderness areas open to waste and abuse.

Source: Mendocino Voice, March 12, 2025, and CBS News.

Facts: The Forest Service is halting a grant for cleaning up illegal CA cannabis operations. The \$989,400 grant from the federal agency was to remove waste and illegal infrastructure diverting water in 10 counties in Northern CA.

Source: Mar. 17, 2025, <https://www.eenews.net/articles/>

Food Bank Funding Undermined

Facts: The Trump Administration froze \$500 million in funds for shipments of produce, poultry and other foods designated for food banks through the Emergency Food Assistance Program. Amanda Friscia of the Mendo Food Network said they were expecting an additional \$25,000 in administrative allocation from the CCC in 2025, which has now been put on hold. Federal funding accounts for approximately 40% of the Mendo Food Network's annual budget through grants and program contracts. She warned that significant cuts could lead to a "huge deficit," potentially impacting payroll and programming.

Source: NY Times March 20, 2025, and KZYX, March 21, 2025.

Problems Immigrants Face

Facts: Over 47,500 people had been deported nationwide by mid-February with a 221% increase of those deported *without* criminal records. Mendocino County's local economy depends on immigrant labor, in agriculture, construction, households and hospitals. One person was recently detained in Lakeport. The fear of detention and deportation already keeps many families at home.

Source: "Californians picked up in recent ICE raids" in calmatters.org and the *Guardian*:

<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/mar/13/us-immigration-arrests-february-2025>

Education Impacted

Facts: In 2024 California's K-12 schools received \$10.7 billion from the federal Department of Education (DOE), about 9% of its overall K-12 budget for meals, tutoring and after-school programs that especially serve low income students, and services for special education students. The DOE also oversees \$120 billion annually in low-interest student loans, grants and work-study programs for 13 million students nationwide, often the only way students can pay for earning a degree.

Under Trump's directive, the DOE has already laid off half its staff, and Trump has proposed complete elimination of DOE.

Source: <https://calmatters.org/education/k-12-education/2025/02/trump-education/>
and <https://calmatters.org/education/2025/03/education-department>

What We Can Do to Respond:

What's your story? Personal stories of Trump Administration policy impacts are crucial to have. Contact Mendocino Voice, which is collecting stories: info@mendocinovoice.com and share with your representatives.

Join Us! Willits Indivisible is a local organization connected to the national Indivisible focused on protecting our democracy and constitutional rights. Look up **indivisible.org** to learn more. Our local sub-groups are gathering to work on issues together. Sign up on our **Facebook page**; find with announcements about meetings and events.

Contact Your Representatives

City Council of Willits: Mayor Larry Stranske. cityofwillits.org/162/City-Council

Board of Supervisors: <https://www.mendocinocounty.gov/government/board-of-supervisors>

John Haschak represents Willits: haschakj@mendocinocounty.gov

Chris Rogers, CA State Assembly <https://a02.asmdc.org/contact>

Mike McGuire, California State Senator: sd02.senate.ca.gov/contact

Jared Huffman, U.S. Congress Representative: <https://huffman.house.gov/>

Alex Padilla, U.S. Senator: <https://www.padilla.senate.gov/>

Adam Schiff, U.S. Senator: <https://www.schiff.senate.gov/>

Michelle Hutchins, local rep. for Mendocino County Board of Education: Mhutchins.boe@mcoe.us

Learn More from These Sources:

Heather Cox Richardson, political historian with daily facts about attacks on constitutional rights and democracy. *Letters from an American*: <https://heathercoxrichardson.substack.com/>

Indivisible Truth Brigade seeks to disrupt disinformation: <https://indivisible.org/campaign/truth-brigade>

FactCheck.org: nonpartisan consumer advocate

Politifact.org: via the Poynter Institute, a global journalism nonprofit, for informed participants in democracy.

Annenberg Public Policy Center on their research site: www.annenbergpublicpolicycenter.org

Washington Post Fact Checker www.washingtonpost.com/politics/fact-checker/

Cal Matters calmatters.org/about/

California Budget and Policy Center calbudgetcenter.org/about/

Associated Press apnews.com/