



February 22, 2021

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Yarmuth
Chairman
Budget Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jason Smith
Ranking Member
Budget Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Chair
Appropriations Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kay Granger
Ranking Member
Appropriations Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Bobby Scott
Chairman
Education and Labor Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Virginia Foxx
Ranking Member
Education and Labor Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leader McCarthy, Chairman Yarmuth, Ranking Member Smith, Chair DeLauro, Ranking Member Granger, Chairman Scott and Ranking Member Foxx:

As members of the America Forward Coalition, we are writing to offer our strong support for the House Committee on Education and Labor's reconciliation bill portion. The America Forward Coalition is made up of more than 100 innovative, high-impact organizations from across the country that are working to solve some of our most pressing challenges in education, workforce development, and poverty alleviation. America Forward unites social innovators with policymakers to advance a public policy agenda that advances equity, fosters innovation, rewards results, catalyzes cross-sector partnerships, and transforms local impact into national change.

We are very encouraged by President Biden's "American Rescue Plan" because it would direct substantial and much-needed resources to America's education system, among many other priorities. The House Committee on Education and Labor budget reconciliation bill text, as passed by the Committee on February 10, would carry forward this step in providing robust investment in our nation's students, educators, and school communities. The proposed legislation would dedicate billions to support institutions of higher education, strengthen child care providers, expand national service programs, and ensure critical food assistance for families.

In particular, we applaud the inclusion of language requiring that a significant percentage of the \$128.5 billion allocated for safe reopening of K-12 schools be used to support evidence-based, holistic strategies that meet the needs of the whole learner and address the academic, social, and emotional impact of the pandemic. The America Forward Coalition has long-advocated for educational approaches that reflect a comprehensive view of healthy learning and development. The need for holistic supports for students, families, and schools has only been magnified by the COVID-19 pandemic. We are pleased the legislation places an intentional emphasis on evidence-based, whole-learner approaches. At the same time, in order to ensure these funds are used to effectively support all students, we believe it is critical that States and districts be encouraged to leverage the expertise of effective community-based nonprofits as critical partners in carrying out the full array of supports needed to address student learning loss while meeting the needs of the whole learner.

We are also encouraged by the inclusion of \$100 million for the Institute of Educational Sciences to carry out research related to addressing pandemic student learning loss. At America Forward, we know that our education system will need to transform in unprecedented ways to meet the challenges created and exacerbated by the COVID-19 crisis, and research is critical in informing our response as our nation's education system continues to recover. At the same time, we believe additional funding to develop, test and deploy innovations or simply scale innovations being used now to support student learning is needed to truly reshape our education systems to make them more effective, equitable, and resilient in the face of any future crises.

As the House of Representatives continues its work on the Fiscal Year 2021 (FY 21) budget reconciliation package, we encourage you to retain these important provisions in the final bill. We are also strongly supportive of the proposals from other Committees including funding for extending broadband, providing devices for education, additional unemployment insurance, expanding the child tax credit and other provisions.

We cannot ignore the pressing needs of students, families, and nonprofits today, nor can we afford to lose sight of the support that will continue to be necessary in the coming months and years. At America Forward, we believe that Congress must continue to provide significant federal resources and funding beyond this FY 21 reconciliation package in order to meet the

ongoing needs of our students, families and communities. These funding priorities include:

- Significant increases to major formula programs in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), including \$12 billion for Title I; \$1 billion for Title II; and \$1 billion for Title III;
- An additional \$13 billion for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA);
- Ongoing support for postsecondary education students and institutions of higher education;
- Additional investments in federal workforce programs for adult, youth and dislocated workers programs, adult education, and career and technical education; and
- Funding for national service and opportunity youth programs.

We look forward to working with you to ensure that these needed resources are included in any subsequent COVID related package and other funding bills.

Thank you in advance for considering our views.

Sincerely,

America Forward
Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors
Aliento Education Fund
America's Promise Alliance
AppleTree Institute for Education Innovation
Children's Aid
Citizen Schools
City Year, Inc.
College Possible
Communities United for Restorative Youth Justice (CURYJ)
Diverse Charter Schools Coalition
Encore.org
Institute for Child Success
LIFT
National Board for Professional Teaching Standards
New Classrooms
New Teacher Center
Project Evident
Public Allies, Inc.
Reading Partners
REDF

Root Cause
Sacred Generations
Service Year Alliance
Social Impact Architects
Teach For America
The Learning Accelerator
The Opportunity Network
Think of Us
Third Sector Capital Partners
Turnaround for Children
uAspire
Wyman
YouthBuild USA