



March 5, 2021

The Honorable Charles Schumer  
Majority Leader  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Minority Leader  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Bernie Sanders  
Chairman  
Budget Committee  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Lindsey Graham  
Ranking Member  
Budget Committee  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy  
Chairman  
Appropriations Committee  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Shelby  
Ranking Member  
Appropriations Committee  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray  
Chair  
Health, Education, Labor and  
Pensions Committee  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Burr  
Ranking Member  
Health, Education, Labor and  
Pensions Committee  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Leader Schumer, Leader McConnell, Chairman Sanders, Ranking Member Graham, Chairman Leahy, Ranking Member Shelby, Chair Murray and Ranking Member Burr:

As members of the America Forward Coalition, we are writing to offer our strong support for the Senate reconciliation bill provisions relating to important investments in our education and workforce programs. 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 Senate's American Rescue Plan Act 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 \$126 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. In addition, the Senate substitute dedicates from the funds allocated \$1.26 billion to evidence-based summer programs, \$1.26 billion for after-school programs and \$3.15 billion for education technology. 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 Senate 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 that will also provide needed support for the families and communities we serve 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  
Bard Early College (Bard College)  
Braven  
Citizen Schools  
City Year Inc  
Diverse Charter Schools Coalition  
Encore.org  
GreenLight Fund  
Institute For Child Success  
KIPP  
Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC)  
New Classrooms Innovation Partners  
New Leaders  
New Teacher Center  
Our Voice Nuestra Voz  
Peer Health Exchange  
Project Evident  
Reading Partners  
REDF  
Sacred Generations  
The Learning Accelerator  
The Opportunity Network  
Think of Us  
Transcend, Inc.  
Turnaround for Children  
uAspire  
YouthBuild USA  
Wyman