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Congress, It's Time to Move on Infrastructure Impacting Children

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Yesterday, [House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and House Democratic Leadership released](#) the transportation, water, and broadband elements of a national Infrastructure plan in [Moving America and The Environment Forward](#). We applaud Speaker Pelosi and her colleagues for taking this critical step to produce a long overdue plan for the 21st century infrastructure that advances the economic and environmental future of our communities.

While this initial plan does not directly address rebuilding our nation's crumbling public schools Speaker Pelosi noted in for her announcement that the final infrastructure package will take action to rebuild our nation's public school facilities address schools based on the [Rebuild America's School Act \(RASA\)](#) which has been advanced by Education and Labor Chairman Bobby Scott and his Committee. RASA has strong support in the Democratic Caucus with over 200 co-sponsors.

Mary Filardo, the Executive Director of [The Re\[Build\] America's School Infrastructure Coalition \(BASIC\)](#) noted, "The majority of local school districts simply do not have the capacity to rebuild aged infrastructure to meet current health, safety and sustainability requirements. Critically, our nation's public schools are now part of our nation's first line of defense in response to increasing natural disasters. More and more they act as emergency shelters and staging areas for FEMA. These facilities must be resilient and built to the highest safety standards."

Our nation's 100,000 public schools are the second largest sector in our nation's infrastructure after highways. The scale of the problem is enormous since the average age of a public school facility is 50 years old and school districts are annually deferring \$38 billion in critical building improvements and maintenance. This is especially true in our rural communities and major cities.

Thankfully, Speaker Pelosi and Majority Leader Steny Hoyer have made clear that public school facilities belong in the national infrastructure package; that the federal government should be a vital partner in helping to states and local school districts build a new generation of the 21st century schools facilities. This will only happen if we create a new local, state and federal partnership.

"Every day the crisis is growing. Millions of students and teachers sit in classrooms with leaky roofs, exposed to mold, asbestos, lead paint, inadequate heating and air conditioning systems, and poor drinking water-- without question, health and learning suffers. The [Coalition for Healthier Schools](#) understands that the 55 million children in our PK-12 schools don't vote. But parents do," said Claire Barnett, coordinator for the Coalition and Executive Director, Healthy Schools Network.

School districts and communities are desperate to provide healthy, safe, and modern school facilities for their children, but they will not be able to do it without increased capacity in the states, which only federal funding can leverage.

The members of the BASIC Coalition look forward to working with Speaker Pelosi, Majority Leader Hoyer, House and Senate Democrats and Republicans to address this urgent need.

[The Re\[Build\] America's School Infrastructure Coalition \(BASIC\)](#) is a non-partisan coalition of civic, public sector, labor, and industry associations who support federal funding to help under-served public school districts modernize and build K-12 public school facilities. We believe that ALL children should attend healthy, safe, and educationally appropriate school facilities. It's BASIC.

To learn more: Visit BASIC's [website](#), which includes [resources](#) and recent school facilities news.