



March 5, 2020

Dear Supporters of Equitable Public School Facilities,

At a [press conference](#) held at the U.S. Capitol on March 3, 2020 [Speaker Pelosi](#) announced that America's public schools are critical infrastructure and will be included in the *Moving Forward* infrastructure package of House Democrats. This is fantastic news and is thanks to the leadership of [Congressman Bobby Scott](#) (VA-03), Chairman of the House Committee on Education & Labor, and Congressman Norcross (NJ-01) for introducing the Rebuild America's Schools Act HR 865 - RASA.

Speaker Pelosi, Chairman Scott and Congressman Norcross were joined by Congresswoman Jahana Hayes (CT-5) and leadership from the American Federation of Teachers and the National Education Association. The speakers emphasized the harm poor facilities cause students and teachers and the inequities in these conditions. Congressman Norcross reminded the public about the 1.9 million jobs that will come from this investment. If Rebuild America's Schools Act is passed, states would manage a \$100 billion federal grant and bond program that will provide funding to the lowest wealth school districts with the greatest facilities needs.

Federal support for public school infrastructure will leverage local, state and private resources for public education equity. A ten year school infrastructure program will also provide other critical and lasting effects:

- **RASA will increase resiliency in our communities.** Public schools are increasingly on the front line of defense when it comes to natural disasters. They are critical infrastructure as emergency shelters and staging areas for recovery operations. Our schools need to be resilient and built to the highest safety standards to protect our students and staff and support our communities.
- **RASA will help revitalize struggling communities.** Our public schools are essential community anchors. Yet there are depressed rural towns and communities, as well as urban neighborhoods where public schools have been closed, in part because there are not funds to eliminate poor facilities conditions. These communities have lost important public assets and as a result don't attract young families or businesses, which are critical to community vitality and viability.
- **RASA will expand rural broadband.** Student and community access to high speed internet is now a basic requirement for 21st century education and community development. There are still millions of students in rural communities where districts do not have the means to secure broadband access to their public schools, which will advance education and community economic development.
- **RASA will help our nation's economy.** School districts already spend through private sector jobs, businesses, manufacturers, and contractors nearly \$50 billion per year on school construction capital outlay. Yet this level of local and state funding for school construction is

often unstable and making matters worse, falls about \$38 billion a year short for what is needed to provide 21st century facilities. A 10-year federal school facilities modernization program will help stabilize the school construction industry, advance the development of environmentally sustainable products and practices, and even help reduce construction inflation.

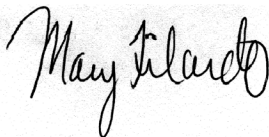
Tremendous progress has been made to bring attention to the needs of our public school infrastructure. The Rebuild America's School Act (RASA) has 212 co-sponsors in the House. There is a companion bill (S 266) with 27 co-sponsors in the Senate. HR 865 has the full support of the House Democratic Caucus. RASA has been marked up and voted out of the Committee on Education & Labor and been sent to the House Ways and Means Committee for mark-up of the section on bonds.

We need this federal, state and local partnership for public school facilities to be a priority. **Please [contact your House and Senate representatives](#) and candidates and share with them the tremendous potential of this bill.** The enactment of this bill will improve education equity, increase resiliency, help revitalize communities, expand rural access to broadband and strengthen our economy—for the millions of workers in the building trades and for the manufacturers, contractors and many other businesses that make up the building industry.

At the press conference, the leadership provided no specifics on when the bill would go to the House floor for a vote, except to assure us that schools will be in the House *Moving Forward* infrastructure package, which House leadership plans to advance this spring.

Let's keep pressure on. Please use anything that is helpful from this letter to share with your elected officials and go to www.buildUSschools.org for other resources in support of equity for our public school buildings and grounds.

Sincerely,



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