



April 9, 2019

U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative:

On behalf of our three million members and the 50 million students they serve, we urge you to VOTE YES on the Investing for the People Act (H.R. 2021), which would lift the caps on non-defense discretionary funding (NDD) for fiscal 2020 and 2021 to prevent devastating cuts in education and other vital programs. Votes on this issue may be included in NEA's Report Card for the 116th Congress.

The Budget Control Act of 2011 requires a \$54 billion cut in NDD funding in fiscal 2020—on average, programs would get 11 percent less than they now receive after adjusting for inflation, the [Center on Budget and Policy Priorities](#) calculates. The Trump/DeVos budget proposal for fiscal 2020 cuts U.S. Department of Education funding by \$8.8 billion (12.5 percent). The result would be drastic cuts in education programs and services that hurt America's students and educators, as well as our economy.

Instead of more cuts, we call on Congress to increase education funding, especially for the students most in need. Specifically, we recommend focusing on:

- **Title I grants to local educational agencies.** In 2011 and each subsequent year, Title I funding has been insufficient to provide services equivalent to those students received in 2010—before Congress adopted spending caps and other austerity measures. After adjusting for inflation and changes in enrollment, which have been modest, Title I funding remains 11 percent below the level needed to keep pace with 2010 service levels.
- **IDEA special education grants to states.** When Congress passed the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act (IDEA), it promised the federal government would pay 40 percent of the excess costs of special education services. It has never come close. The federal share was 16 percent in fiscal 2014 and has declined for the last five years. In fiscal 2019, the federal share was under 14 percent—the lowest level since 2000. The failure to fund IDEA fully has shifted costs to the states, forcing them to choose between raising taxes and cutting critical services for all students.

In contrast to the Trump/DeVos budget proposal, the Investing for the People Act provides a realistic starting point for budget negotiations—space for Congress to do the work that needs to get done. We urge you to VOTE YES on H.R. 2021.

Sincerely,

Marc Egan
Director of Government Relations
National Education Association