



1201 16th St., N.W. | Washington, DC 20036 | Phone: (202) 833-4000

Lily Eskelsen García  
*President*

Rebecca S. Pringle  
*Vice President*

Princess R. Moss  
*Secretary-Treasurer*

Kim A. Anderson  
*Executive Director*

September 9, 2019

United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the more than 3 million members of the National Education Association, we urge you to cosponsor and support a bill to extend the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 (S. 430) and the Forest Management for Rural Stability Act (S. 1643).

Before the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act's passage, many forest-impacted communities experienced dramatic reductions in federal forestland revenues due to significant decreases in federal timber sales. As a result, payments to many rural forest schools dropped to less than 10 percent of historic levels. Devastating losses of education funding led to reductions in teaching staff and other education personnel, elimination of extracurricular programs, cancellation of school meals programs, and postponement of desperately needed building repairs. The Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act offered a solution by:

- Ensuring a predictable payment to federally impacted forest counties;
- Providing vital funding for educational services for students in over 775 rural counties and 4,400 schools;
- Preventing the closure of isolated rural schools and the layoffs of school staff and other public-service workers; and
- Protecting funding for libraries, sheriff patrols, local corrections facilities, search and rescue operations, and mental health care services.

S. 430 will offer a much-needed extension of the Secure Rural Schools program for FY 2019 and 2020 and will provide the near-term stability to enable rural schools to meet the educational needs of their students. Please contact the office of Sen. Mike Crapo (R-ID) to cosponsor this bipartisan legislation.

However, rural communities and schools need a more permanent solution. The NEA supports and urges you to cosponsor the Forest Management for Rural Stability Act, sponsored by Sen. Ron Wyden (D-OR). S. 1643 would establish an endowment fund to provide long-term, reliable, and increasing funding for the Secure Rural Schools program. This permanent solution will give schools in forested counties the stability and security to provide students in rural schools with the services and learning tools they deserve.

Thank you for your consideration of these important pieces of legislation and your commitment to ensuring that rural schools and communities near National Forests receive the resources they need.

Sincerely,

Marc Egan  
Director of Government Relations

