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May 4, 2020

U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative:

The National Education Association, along with more than 50 national education and related organizations, [call on](#) the U.S. House of Representatives to include funding for the Emergency Connectivity Fund, administrated through the Federal Communications Commission’s (FCC’s) E-Rate program, for schools and libraries to help close the digital divide by supporting distance and remote learning for students without home internet access during the COVID-19 pandemic.

With an estimated 9 to 12 million students and some of their teachers currently lacking home internet access and unable to participate in teaching and learning, the need is great for Representative Meng’s legislation. We also strongly believe the E-Rate program is the best vehicle to disseminate funds quickly to schools and libraries based on the program’s successful equity-based 22-year history—with priority to those with the greatest need. Without permanently changing the existing E-Rate program, the FCC can quickly move this dedicated emergency funding for the homework gap through the E-Rate, making the necessary tailored adjustments to the program needed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

We believe the challenge facing millions of students across the country experiencing the homework gap demands and requires a dedicated funding source to ensure continuity in teaching and learning, whether in the classroom or from home.

We strongly urge you to join Representative Meng and cosponsor her bill to ensure it is included in the next COVID-19 funding package passed by Congress. The text of her “Dear Colleague” letter follows.

Sincerely,

Marc Egan  
Director of Government Relations  
National Education Association

**Co-sponsor Representative Meng's Homework Gap bill—Emergency Educational Connections Act (H.R. 6563)**

Deadline to sign on is noon on Friday, May 8th

Dear Colleague,

Please join me in sending a letter to House and Senate Leadership urging them to include the \$2 billion Emergency Educational Connections Act of 2020, H.R. 6563 in the next coronavirus relief package. Millions of kids without internet access at home are at great risk of falling behind during the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic emergency. This must not happen.

As you know, H.R. 6563 is an updated standalone of the provision that was included in the House Democrat's Take Responsibility for Workers and Families Act, that would have provided \$2 billion in funding to provide students with Wi-Fi hotspots and internet-enabled devices for the duration of the coronavirus pandemic. Specifically, the Emergency Educational Connections Act would provide \$2 billion to schools and libraries, including tribal schools and libraries, to purchase Wi-Fi hotspots, modems, routers, and internet-enabled devices (as well as internet service through such equipment) for students, staff, and patrons. This bill is endorsed by over 52 organizations, including the National Education Association; American Library Association; and the American Federation of Teachers.

**Additionally, to be added as a cosponsor to H.R. 6563, the Emergency Educational Connections Act, please fill out this separate Google form [HERE](#).**

Because of school closures related to COVID-19, over 55 million students are currently at home adjusting to a new remote learning environment. Before this health crisis began, nearly 12 million students without internet access were part of the so called 'homework gap'. Today, because of this crisis, this gap is more like a chasm. Including the Emergency Educational Connections Act in the next coronavirus package will go a long way toward ensuring every child has internet access. No child should lose out on an education because they lack this access.

Deadline to sign on is noon on Friday, May 8th. For any questions, please contact Mark Olson of my staff at [mark.olson@mail.house.gov](mailto:mark.olson@mail.house.gov).

Sincerely,

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Grace Meng  
Member of Congress