October 14, 2020

U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator:

The National Education Association and our 52 affiliates represent 3 million educators serving 50 million students all across America. On their behalf, we strongly urge you to heed the will of the American people: Pass a robust COVID-19 stimulus and relief bill immediately and wait until after Inauguration Day to confirm the next Supreme Court justice.

The Senate majority is rushing to confirm President Trump’s nominee, Amy Coney Barrett, before Election Day when that is NOT what the American people want. At least a dozen polls have found that most Americans want the winners of the 2020 elections—already underway—to choose the successor to Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg.

Reopening schools safely and alleviating suffering from COVID-19 should be the top priorities of Congress—for good reason. COVID-19 is taking an ever-increasing toll on our nation’s physical and economic health. To date, more than 7.5 million Americans have contracted COVID-19 and over 210,000 have died from it. Millions of Americans have lost their jobs, including 835,000 educators. The unemployment rate is 7.9 percent, and every day brings reports of new layoffs.

The choice of the next Supreme Court justice merits careful consideration, especially since it will have profound implications for decades to come. The first challenge is almost upon us.

On November 10, the Supreme Court will hear a case that could eliminate the entire Affordable Care Act, causing 21 million Americans to lose health coverage and premiums to skyrocket for the 133 million Americans with pre-existing conditions that now include COVID-19. President Trump has promised that Judge Barrett will strike down the law, and Barrett herself has said she would have struck it down before now.

Throughout her career, Judge Barrett has sided with the powerful and well-connected over ordinary Americans. She has expressed misgivings about the Supreme Court’s decision to preserve the Affordable Care Act and questioned the legal basis for other important rights and protections. Public education, collective bargaining, voting rights, LGBTQ rights, First Amendment protections, racial and social justice, and much more would be at risk if Judge Barrett is confirmed—especially in light of her views on stare decisis (to stand by that which is decided). In plain English, she believes standing by precedent is not all that important.
The majority of the American people say, by big margins, that the winners of the ongoing elections should choose the successor to Justice Ginsburg. By even bigger margins, the majority of the American people say Congress should focus on getting the pandemic under control and providing relief for America’s suffering students, families, and communities.

We agree and urge the Senate to heed the people’s voice.

Sincerely,

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President, National Education Association

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