



1201 16th Street, NW | Washington, DC 20036 | Phone: (202) 833-4000

Rebecca S. Pringle
President

Princess R. Moss
Vice President

Noel Candelaria
Secretary-Treasurer

Kim A. Anderson
Executive Director

February 9, 2021

Committee on Education and Labor
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative:

On behalf of our 3 million members and the 50 million students they serve, we would like to submit for the record the following comments in connection with today's markup of the Concurrent Resolution on the Budget for Fiscal Year 2021, S. Con. Res. 5. Votes on this issue may be included in NEA's Report Card for the 117th Congress.

Specifically, we are pleased to support:

- **\$170 billion to help safely reopen K-12 school buildings and college campuses.** Reopening buildings safely necessitates costly physical modifications—in classrooms, cafeterias, school buses, and more—to permit social distancing; retooling HVAC systems to address dangerous aerosolization and ensure proper ventilation; and providing personal protective equipment (PPE) for students and educators. In addition, schools and institutions of higher education need to intensify support and instruction for students traumatized by the impact of the coronavirus on their families and communities, and the loss of opportunities to learn during this difficult time.
- **\$39 billion for early education.** Funding for programs run by the Department of Health and Human Services includes the Child Care and Development Block Grant and the child care stabilization fund for providers.
- **Strengthening the Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT) program.** This program is critical to ensuring that children do not go hungry during the public health emergency posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The P-EBT program needs to continue for the duration of the current public emergency, including next summer, as well as during any future public health emergencies associated with the pandemic.
- **Raising the federal minimum wage to \$15 per hour.** It has been more than a decade since the last increase in the federal minimum wage—from \$6.55 to \$7.25 per hour. A further increase is long overdue, especially for education support professionals. At the current federal minimum wage of \$7.25 per hour, a parent who works full-time (40

hours a week, 52 weeks a year) earns about \$15,000 a year, well below the official poverty level in 2020: \$26,200 a year for a family of four.

- **Subsidizing COBRA so people who lose their jobs can continue their health benefits.** Now more than ever, it is essential to have access to health care. As currently written, S. Con. Res. 5 would cover 85 percent of COBRA premiums from April 1 through Sept. 30, 2021. We urge you to increase that to 100 percent of COBRA premiums.

We thank you for the opportunity to submit these comments and stand ready to work with the Committee to enact this desperately needed legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marc Egan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Marc Egan
Director of Government Relations
National Education Association