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July 26, 2021

U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the 3 million members of the National Education Association, who teach and support students in 14,000 communities across America, we urge you to vote YES on the Consider Teachers Act of 2021, S. 848. Votes on this issue may be included in the NEA Report Card for the 117th Congress.

By addressing problems with the Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education (TEACH) Grant Program, the Consider Teachers Act would encourage students to pursue careers in education and consider teaching in high-need fields or schools.

The TEACH program promises \$4,000 per year in grant assistance to students who are completing course work needed to begin teaching careers. Once they graduate from their programs, they must serve for at least four years as full-time teachers in a high-need field, or teach in schools that serve low-income families. The program gives individuals eight years in which to complete their service requirement. If they do not fulfill the obligation, the grant converts to a Federal Direct Unsubsidized Stafford Loan.

Currently, however, paperwork issues and other problems mean many educators are not receiving the promised benefits. In fact, the program has a 66-percent conversion rate. The Consider Teachers Act would help the TEACH program operate more efficiently and reach more educators by:

- Codifying the reconsideration process and having the Education Department continue the process, regardless of a change in administration or leadership;
- Reverting loans that successfully make it through the reconsideration process to grants and discharging any accumulated interest fees;
- Revising the employment certification process by outlining yearly deadlines and notification requirements; and
- Providing time extensions to educators to fulfill their service obligations if their employment was impacted or terminated due to COVID-19.

We can only provide America's students with the best education possible if we encourage the best and brightest individuals to become educators. The Consider Teachers Act will address the challenges that are keeping the TEACH program from achieving its worthy goals.

Sincerely,

Marc Egan  
Director of Government Relations  
National Education Association