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August 10, 2021

U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator:

The 3 million members of the National Education Association, who teach and support students in 14,000 communities across America, urge you to vote YES on S.Con.Res.14 to advance key elements of the administration's Build Back Better agenda on jobs, education, and families, and continue to strengthen the economy. Votes associated with this issue may be included in the NEA Report Card for the 117th Congress.

The Fiscal Year 2022 Budget Resolution introduced by Senate Budget Committee Chairman Bernie Sanders (I-VT) will allow Congress to move forward in providing critical support for working families and students, especially during a time when our nation is continuing to deal with the effects and impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The NEA strongly supports key investments called for in the resolution and urges you to go further in some areas in the subsequent reconciliation bill, including:

MODERNIZING SCHOOL FACILITIES

We believe the reconciliation bill that follows the budget resolution should include the Reopen and Rebuild America's Schools Act (S. 96/H.R. 604), which will create a \$100-billion grant program and \$30-billion tax credit bond program targeting high-poverty schools in which facilities pose health and safety risks to students and staff.

MAKING HIGHER EDUCATION MORE AFFORDABLE AND INVESTING IN EDUCATOR PREPARATION

We ask that the legislation provide two years of free community college for all, including Dreamers and part-time students; increase Pell grants and expand students' access to them; and support Grow Your Own programs and other efforts to increase and diversify the educator workforce.

SUPPORTING YOUNG CHILDREN AND EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

We support expanding the Child Tax Credit to continue reducing childhood poverty; providing universal pre-kindergarten to every 3- and 4-year-old; and upgrading child care facilities and increasing the supply of child care where it is most needed.

PROVIDING FREE SCHOOL MEALS TO ALL

We ask you to broaden community eligibility to provide free school meals to additional students, and expand electronic benefits transfer options and provide school meals during summer and when schools are closed. We believe the reconciliation bill that follows should include healthy school meals for all students, permanently.

EXPANDING STUDENT ACCESS TO DIGITAL LEARNING

We call on you to make additional investment in the E-Rate Program through inclusion of the SUCCESS Act, which will connect students to the internet who currently have no access at home.

PROTECTING WORKERS AND FAMILIES

We support modifying the Family and Medical Leave Act to include education support professionals; guaranteeing up to 12 weeks of paid leave; expanding eligibility for unemployment benefits and ensuring that going forward funding can support adequate benefits during a national crisis; and including the Protect the Right to Organize Act.

ENSURING A PATHWAY TO CITIZENSHIP

We ask that you make meaningful immigration reforms that provide a pathway to citizenship for Dreamers/Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients, Temporary Protected Status (TPS) holders, farm workers, and essential workers for whom America is home.

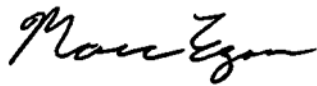
INVESTING IN AMERICA THROUGH TAX FAIRNESS

Please ensure tax fairness by making corporations and the wealthiest Americans pay their share of taxes.

We urge you to vote **AGAINST** amendments that would: cut funding for public schools, campuses, or state, local, and tribal governments; redirect public dollars to private schools via vouchers, tax credits, education savings accounts, 529 plans, or similar schemes; enable federal intrusion into local decision-making on issues related to the healthy operation of schools during the pandemic; impede educators' efforts to teach history, social studies, and civics honestly and in a way that expands students' knowledge and analytical skills; install budget caps or fiscal restraints that limit the ability to invest in national priorities; cut funding for health care, including Medicaid or Medicare, or for retirement security; deny a pathway to citizenship for immigrant families or double-down on anti-immigration policies; impede workers' right to organize; or weaken food assistance programs.

Congress has a unique opportunity to build on the progress made by the American Rescue Plan. For the good of our nation, please vote YES on S.Con.Res.14 to begin the process of making crucial investments in students and the health and well-being of working families.

Sincerely,



Marc Egan
Director of Government Relations
National Education Association