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September 8, 2021

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

Dear Representative:

The 3 million members of the National Education Association, who teach and support students in 14,000 communities across America, appreciate this opportunity to offer comments for the committee's markup of the Build Back Better Act. We urge you to vote YES on the chairman's mark and its many measures to support students and families and strengthen the economy. Votes associated with these issues may be included in the NEA Report Card for the 117th Congress.

Congress must 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 of the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, Congress should ensure all provisions are inclusive of all students, including immigrant students. The NEA strongly supports the committee's proposed investments and urges you to go even further in some areas, including:

SUPPORTING YOUNG CHILDREN AND EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

We support the committee's proposal of \$450 billion to help working families afford high-quality child care and to provide universal pre-kindergarten to every 3- and 4-year-old.

MODERNIZING SCHOOL FACILITIES

We appreciate the committee's inclusion of \$82 billion over five years to repair, modernize, and rebuild America's public school buildings, as we have supported Chairman Scott's Reopen and Rebuild America's Schools Act (H.R. 604) targeting high-poverty schools in which facilities pose health and safety risks to students and staff.

SUPPORTING CHILD NUTRITION

We appreciate the committee's work to: expand community eligibility in a manner that will allow more schools to serve healthy meals to students at no cost, dramatically increasing the number of students who will no longer be subject to the stigma of means testing; expand Summer EBT to ensure that students who need meals during the summer do not go hungry when school is out; and provide \$500 million in grants to upgrade schools' kitchen equipment, increasing access to healthier foods. We believe these measures move us closer to providing healthy school meals for *all* students, permanently.

LOWERING THE COST OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND INVESTING IN EDUCATOR PREPARATION

As called for in the chairman's mark, we support providing two years of free community college for all, including Dreamers and part-time students; increasing the value of Pell grants and expanding students' access to them; and making targeted investments in Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Tribal

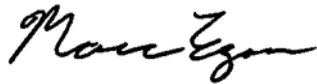
Colleges and Universities, Hispanic-Serving Institutions, and other Minority-Serving Institutions. We also support Grow Your Own programs, teacher residencies, and similar efforts to build and diversify the educator workforce.

PREPARING STUDENTS AND WORKERS FOR GOOD JOBS

The committee's investments in crucial workforce development and Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs are appreciated and will assist students and job-seekers in gaining the skills required for good-paying jobs; we would also like to see additional investments that will help individuals succeed in an ever-changing labor market. We also hope CTE will be included as part of postsecondary proposals, such as free college and college retention/completion initiatives, including programs at area CTE centers.

We appreciate the committee's investment in students, families, and workers and stand ready to work with you in these efforts as the House moves forward on the Build Back Better agenda.

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