

September 2, 2020

The Honorable Bobby Scott
Chairman
House Education & Labor Committee
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Virginia Foxx
Ranking Member
House Education & Labor Committee
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Chairwoman
House Labor-H Appropriations Subcommittee
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Cole
Ranking Member
House Labor-H Appropriations Subcommittee
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Chairman
Senate Labor-H Appropriations Subcommittee
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Lamar Alexander
Chairman
Senate HELP Committee
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member
Senate HELP Committee
Senate Labor-H Appropriations Subcommittee
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Scott, Ranking Member Foxx, Chairwoman DeLauro, Ranking Member Cole, Chairman Blunt, Chairman Alexander, and Ranking Member Murray:

We, the undersigned 24 organizations, write to express our support for adding a [Maintenance of Equity](#) requirement to any proposed federal education relief package to ensure that state and district leaders do not ask students from low-income backgrounds, students of color, and educators of color to shoulder a disproportionate share of cuts in state and local education spending. Together with a strong Maintenance of Effort requirement, these two requirements would ensure that not only are states minimizing cuts to education broadly, but that any cuts do not disproportionately harm low-income communities and communities of color.

We implore state leaders to protect education budgets from any potential cuts. However, given that experts are [forecasting](#) substantial state budget cuts around the country, Congress must ensure that the schools and districts serving students and educators most impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic are shielded, especially since these are the schools and districts that have been historically underfunded, disproportionately rely on state revenue, and are at [greatest risk](#) for state funding cuts. During the Great Recession, states slashed nearly [\\$24 billion](#) in just one year from education budgets, and those cuts disproportionately impacted low-income communities. As a result, the funding gap between low-poverty and high-poverty districts [more than tripled](#). These cuts had a heartbreaking human cost in the form of [hundreds of thousands of lost educator jobs](#). And Black and Latinx students bore the brunt, as they were [significantly more likely](#) than their White peers to live in districts that lost large numbers of teaching jobs. Not surprisingly, layoffs from budget cuts also tend to hit Black and Latinx teachers hardest, since teachers of color are [overrepresented](#) among early-career teachers.

Without action by Congress, we know this pattern will repeat itself. A Maintenance of Equity requirement would disrupt this injustice by:

- Requiring states and districts that receive federal education stimulus funds to protect their high-poverty districts and schools from funding and staffing cuts that are greater than average; and
- Requiring data about any staffing cuts to be reported publicly, disaggregated by race and ethnicity, so that families, educators, and advocates know whether students and educators of color are shouldering a disproportionate share of the budget cuts.

COVID-19 is already [inflicting greater pain](#) on [communities of color](#) and low-income communities far beyond our schools, because of our long-standing systemic inequities in access to [healthcare](#), jobs that allow [remote work](#), and safe and healthy [housing](#), among others. Congress must add a Maintenance of Equity provision to any future education relief funds to ensure that we do not double down on these inequities by asking these same communities to shoulder a disproportionate share of COVID-19-induced education budget cuts – as they have before.

Sincerely,

Alliance for Excellent Education
American Atheists
Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents (ALAS)
Center for American Progress
Clearinghouse on Women's Issues
Committee for Children
Council of Administrators of Special Education
EDGE Consulting Partners
Education Reform Now
The Education Trust
Educators for Excellence
Feminist Majority Foundation
GLSEN
National Association of Secondary School Principals
National Center for Learning Disabilities
National Urban League
New America, Education Policy Program
New Leaders
Next100
PDK International
School Social Work Association of America
Teach Plus
TNTP
UnidosUS