



February 26, 2019

The Honorable Bobby Scott
Chairman
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Education and Labor
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Scott:

On behalf of the 1.7 million members of the American Federation of Teachers, I write in strong support of H.R. 865, the Rebuild America's Schools Act of 2019.

First, I want to applaud you for recognizing that modernizing and repairing public schools should be both a local and a national priority.

Earlier this month, I had the privilege of testifying before your committee and spoke about the importance of this much-needed legislation. H.R. 865 would invest more than \$100 billion to address critical physical and digital infrastructure needs in public schools and libraries in the communities that need it most. In addition to addressing these infrastructure needs, this legislation would offer new jobs to communities and help grow local and state economies. In fact, it is estimated that this relatively small federal investment would create 1.9 million jobs.

The goal of improving health and safety and learning conditions in school buildings located in high-poverty school districts should be something supported by everyone serving on the Education and Labor Committee. Our AFT members—including early childhood and prekindergarten through 12th-grade teachers, paraprofessionals and other school-related personnel—and the students they serve see and feel the effects of a lack of investment in public school facilities and public education as a whole. Now is the time to act and send our educators and their students a message that we truly care about investing in them and in their facilities.

Our members know that students can't thrive in schools laden with black toxic mold, classrooms without heat or air conditioning, and with leaking ceilings and contaminated water. Moreover, our members understand that student success depends on a school's capacity to provide students with the actual tools necessary to compete in the 21st century.

AFT members also recognize the unique role the federal government can play in helping children receive a high-quality education in a safe, healthy and robust learning environment by infusing support to our public education system through school modernization and construction.

The **American Federation of Teachers** is a union of professionals that champions fairness; democracy; economic opportunity; and high-quality public education, healthcare and public services for our students, their families and our communities. We are committed to advancing these principles through community engagement, organizing, collective bargaining and political activism, and especially through the work our members do.

American Federation
of Teachers, AFL-CIO

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AFT PSRP
AFT Higher Education
AFT Public Employees
AFT Nurses and Health
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The AFT has been walking the walk on infrastructure investments for years, harnessing the billions in our members' pension funds to serve the common good. In 2011, the American labor movement committed \$10 billion over five years for infrastructure. Now, \$16 billion has been allocated, creating at least 100,000 jobs. We will continue to do everything we can to improve our nation's infrastructure, but we need more allies. It is time for a new partnership between federal, state and local governments so that we can rebuild and modernize our nation's schools.

Passing H.R. 865 out of committee is an important first step in building this new alliance, which can work together to address the infrastructure needs of our nation's schools.

Thank you for your leadership on this issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Randi Weingarten". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "R" and "W".

Randi Weingarten
President

RW : emc opeiu#2 afl-cio