

February 25, 2019

The Honorable Bobby Scott
Chairman
Committee on Education and Labor
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Virginia Foxx
Ranking Member
Committee on Education and Labor
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Scott and Ranking Member Foxx:

The National PTA is writing to express support for H.R. 865, the Rebuild America's Schools Act of 2019. The National PTA is comprised of 3.5 million parents, teachers and other child advocates who work toward bettering the lives of every child in education, health and safety. We urge the Committee to pass this legislation to enable more of our students to attend schools without health and safety risks and learn in school buildings that can support the technology for modern and essential digital learning.

Numerous studies have documented the growing gap in resources to keep our nation's school buildings in a condition that supports learning without jeopardizing student safety. The U.S. Department of Education, the General Accounting Office, the landmark 2016 State of our Schools study and others have documented that hundreds of billions are needed to remedy unsafe, dilapidated and out-of-date school facilities. This funding shortfall is exacerbated by air quality hazards, substandard heating and cooling equipment and unsafe drinking water supply.

Coupled with these physical plant and health related issues, many school buildings do not have the modern technological infrastructure to maximize student learning. Even in 2019, thousands of our nation's school buildings lack the wiring and internet connectivity to adequately support online learning. Not only is the health of our students being placed at risk, but their learning opportunities are being diminished, jeopardizing their educational and economic futures. As a nation we can do better.

Fortunately, H.R. 865 responds to these shortcomings. The measure's \$70 billion in grant aid and \$30 billion in tax-based assistance is targeted to the schools that need the most aid in addressing crumbling and outdated school buildings. The bill's requirement to catalog the existing condition of school facilities is also critical to begin to get a school by school understanding of what is needed to ensure up to date, safe school facilities exist for all of our students. The totality of the legislation would also ensure that the idea of online learning becomes a reality.

The passage of this legislation is essential to ensuring that our students are learning in the schools that they deserve. We urge you to pass this legislation expeditiously in Committee and on the

House floor as a standalone measure or as part of a larger infrastructure package. Thank you for our attention to our views and for supporting our nation's students.

Sincerely,



James L. Accomando
President
National PTA



Nathan R. Monell, CAE
Executive Director
National PTA