

Rebuild America's Schools

#BuildSchoolsNotWalls

Rebuild America's Schools Act Talking Points

Core Messaging

- Countless students attend school in crumbling buildings that are either unsafe, not equipped with essential resources, or both. The Rebuild America's Schools Act is an important step toward ensuring that every student, regardless of their family's wealth, can attend a safe, welcoming, and high-quality public school.
- The *Rebuild America's School Act* would invest more than \$100 billion in the physical and digital infrastructure of schools across the country, which would create 1.9 million good-paying jobs. This bill would strengthen our communities today by employing local workers and strengthen our communities in the future by setting a strong foundation for all students to reach their potential.
- Investments in public education have overwhelming support across the political spectrum. Students, teachers, and parents throughout the country are demanding that we prioritize education and reinvest in our public schools.

Core Messaging + Supporting

After decades of inadequate support for public education – felt most deeply in the lowest-income communities – Countless students attend school in crumbling buildings that are either unsafe, not equipped with essential technology, or both. The Rebuild America's Schools Act is an important step toward ensuring that every student, regardless of their family's wealth, can attend a safe, welcoming, and high-quality public school.

- Districts across the country have had to cancel school days – or in some cases, school weeks – because of poor air quality or building maintenance issues.
 - On January 22, 2019 a West Virginia high school was [forced to cancel eight school days](#) when an old electrical panel failed, shutting off the lights and heating.
 - At the beginning of the 2018-19 school year, 10 Baltimore schools [were forced to close or dismiss early](#) because they lacked air conditioning. Nearly half of Baltimore's schools were built in the 1960s or earlier, and just 3 percent were built since 1985.

- In September 2018, [dozens of New Jersey schools](#) were forced to close because of mold. According to a 2014 CDC survey, less than half of schools have a program in place today to address indoor air quality issues
- A series of government and private sector reports have documented the chronic underfunding of America's public schools.
 - In 2014, a [Department of Education study](#) estimated that **it would cost \$197 billion to bring all public schools into good condition.**
 - According to a [State of our Schools report](#) published in 2016, K-12 school facilities are – on average – **underfunded by \$46 billion every year** compared to building industry and best-practice standards.
 - A [2017 EducationSuperHighway](#) report found that over 19,000 schools serving more than 11.6 million students “are without the minimum connectivity necessary for digital learning.”
- When students spend a majority of their days in crumbling and unsafe schools, it sends a message about the value of their education. On any given school day, about twenty percent of Americans spend time in a school building.
 - According to a [2002 report](#), noise, heat, cold, light, and air quality obviously bear on students' and teachers' ability to perform.

The *Rebuild America's School Act* would invest \$100 billion in the physical and digital infrastructure of schools across the country and create 1.9 million good-paying jobs. The *Rebuild America's School Act* would strengthen our communities today by employing local workers and strengthen our communities in the future by setting a strong foundation for students to learn and grow.

- The bill creates a \$70 billion grant program and \$30 billion tax credit bond program targeted at high-poverty schools with facilities that pose health and safety risks to students and staff.
- The bill leverages federal, state, and local resources for an overall investment of \$107 billion, creating roughly 1.9 million jobs (*based on an Economic Policy Institute analysis that each \$1 billion spent on construction creates 17,785 jobs*).
- The bill develops a comprehensive national database on the condition of public school facilities.
 - Such a national database currently does not exist and would provide much-needed insight into the condition of our public schools.
- The bill expands access to high-speed broadband to ensure that public schools have the reliable and high-speed internet access they need for digital learning.

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- Students, teachers, and parents in a diverse group of states – including Oklahoma, West Virginia, Arizona, California – have expressed public outrage over the lack of funding for local K-12 public schools.
- [In a recent poll](#) conducted by POLITICO/Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, 84 percent of Democrats and 65 percent of Republicans said increasing K-12 funding is an “extremely important priority” for the 116th Congress.
- If a Republican Congress can find nearly \$2 trillion for a tax cut that overwhelmingly benefits corporations and the wealthy, we can find five percent of that amount to invest in our schools.