

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 27, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Democratic Leader
United States Senate
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Leader McConnell and Leader Schumer:

Our economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic will require significant additional federal resources designed to put people back to work and lay the foundation for future growth and prosperity. A robust investment in infrastructure would create jobs and promote economic development. We believe that any infrastructure plan as a part of the recovery effort must include our public schools.

Schools are our second largest public infrastructure expenditure, yet the American Society of Civil Engineers gave our public school facilities a grade of D+ on its latest report card. The average public school building was built in 1968, and many schools cannot support the modern technology necessary for a 21st century education. Moreover, we know that our states and local school districts cannot finance this need on their own. The State of Our Schools 2016 report documented a \$38 billion per year shortfall on public school infrastructure funding in the U.S. – a situation that will only grow more dire with the current crisis.

As this crisis has shown us, our public schools are critical community infrastructure. Our students and families rely on them for education, nutrition, health care, and enrichment activities. They are often the safest places for our most vulnerable youth. They are community meeting spaces. They are our polling places. They are a shared resource and vital to community health and well-being. As state and local budgets work to recover from the economic crisis this pandemic has caused, education budgets will be stretched thin and investment in our public schools will likely fall even further behind. We must take active steps to upgrade our public schools' physical and information technology infrastructure. Our recovery will depend on it.

As you develop the next legislative package to support our recovery from the COVID-19 crisis, we call on you to include a major investment in school infrastructure along the lines of the \$100 billion that has been proposed in the Rebuild America's Schools Act (S. 266). We look forward to working with you to put our nation on a path to recovery and renewed prosperity.

Sincerely,

Jack Reed
United States Senator

Sherrod Brown
United States Senator

Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator

Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator

Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator

Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator

Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator

Mazie Hirono
United States Senator

Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator

Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator

Cory A. Booker
United States Senator

Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator

Edward J. Markey
United States Senator

Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator

Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator

Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator

Jacky Rosen
United States Senator

Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senator

Kamala D. Harris
United States Senator

Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator