



Keep Our Teachers Working

“We need and our children need our teachers in the classroom. We need your passion and your patience, your skill and experience, your determination to reach every single child.”

– President Barack Obama, April 29, 2010

Across America State and local budget cuts are threatening hundreds of thousands of education jobs. While school districts report that the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funded over 400,000 jobs last quarter, a significant loss in education jobs is projected for the coming school year when states will have expended over 99 percent of education relief made available under the ARRA. Such a massive loss of jobs would directly impact students who will experience the effects first hand – through reductions in core class time, a shortened school calendar, cuts to afterschool programming, a loss of early childhood opportunities, reductions in summer school and arts enrichment and reduced access to college counselors and school nurses. Simply put, the education of our children will be at risk. These losses will also ripple through the economic system, creating a new drag on job creation and the American economy.

State budget gaps and shortfalls are compromising educational support and services for children. According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, state budget shortfalls are estimated to reach \$180 billion in fiscal year 2011. Education cuts for next year have already been announced in California, Illinois, Michigan, Mississippi, New Jersey, New York and Rhode Island, and thousands of teacher and education jobs are at risk in many more. These proposed reductions come after 29 states and the District of Columbia have already implemented cuts to K-12 education. Budget cuts and a loss of education jobs often translate into larger class sizes, shorter school days and weeks, the elimination of math and science initiatives, and fewer afterschool programs and services. A loss of education jobs will also lead to unprecedented hardships for teachers, and create a long-term burden on our economy. As teachers lose their jobs and their families trim their spending, economic activity will be depressed, unemployment rolls will soar, and tax revenues will decrease.

To avert this crisis, President Obama has called for \$23 billion in emergency support to preserve education jobs. Modeled after the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund (SFSF) established in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), this funding will keep teachers in the classroom at *all* levels while helping to sustain meaningful and necessary reforms underway in public education. The President has also called upon Congress to deliver \$2 billion in support to localities for police and firefighters to ensure that our communities remain safe and \$1 billion in funds to preserve early childhood education jobs to ensure that our youngest children do not lose supports and services critical to their learning and well-being.

According to provisional estimates by the White House Council of Economic Advisers, the education jobs bill will fund approximately 300,000 education jobs next school year at the elementary and secondary levels (state numbers attached). In addition, the Office of Budget and Management estimates that providing \$1 billion for child care can be expected to preserve nearly 28,000 jobs. When one considers the costs associated with losing these jobs, **providing the \$23 billion for education jobs works out to be 20 to 40 percent less expensive than the gross cost of the bill.** Because saving education jobs will lead to lower unemployment insurance costs, lower COBRA costs, and greater tax revenues, this investment will produce indirect federal savings of \$4.5-\$9 billion.

Reforming our public schools requires a stable financial foundation. Jobs and reform go hand-in-hand, and a loss of education jobs threatens to undermine progress being made to improve student achievement, increase learning time, expand academic opportunities and close achievement gaps to help America's students graduate college- and career-ready. At this moment, lawmakers and educators all across America are finalizing their budgets for the coming school year. **We must act quickly and responsibly to offer the assistance they need – to keep our teachers teaching, keep our students learning, and keep our economy growing.** Investing in education now will help tens of millions of students become more productive citizens and positively affect America's long-term fiscal health.