

Adams, Reed, Casey, Axne, Gallego, & Hayes Introduce EDUCATORS for America Act



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WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, **Congresswoman Alma Adams (NC-12)** and **Representatives Cindy Axne (IA-03), Jahana Hayes (CT-05), and Ruben Gallego (AZ-07)** in the House, as well as **U.S. Senators Jack Reed (D-RI) and Bob Casey (D-PA)** in the Senate introduced the ***EDUCATORS for America Act***, urgently-needed legislation to address teacher shortages exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. The *EDUCATORS Act* will invest in states and educators to improve the teacher pipeline and create more career-ready teachers and school support staff.

"As an educator for forty years, I always hoped some of the bright young minds I taught would go on to become educators themselves. Unfortunately, aspiring educators are often discouraged by high student debt, low salaries, and the lack of institutional support," **said Congresswoman Adams**. "Educators are struggling, particularly as they continue to grapple with the pandemic. Schools are facing pervasive staffing shortages, and we can no longer afford to neglect the educator pipeline. It's time for a comprehensive national investment in our educators."

"The *EDUCATORS for America Act* will mobilize and support states and local communities in improving the educator pipeline so that all schools have the diverse educators they should have, to support student development and academic achievement. It will support educator preparation programs and partnerships and remove financial barriers to entering the education profession. After the disruption and devastation of the COVID-19 pandemic wreaked on our education system, we can't wait for the next generation of teachers to appear; we **must** act intentionally to urgently recruit hard-working teachers in the classroom, and importantly, provide them the support to retain them in the classrooms. That's why I'm proud to introduce the *EDUCATORS for America Act* with my House colleagues and Senate partners," **concluded Adams**.

"Our nation's outlook for the future is tied to the strength of the education profession and

today the profession is in crisis," **said Senator Reed, a senior member of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies, and a long-time champion for educator preparation and professional development.** "The EDUCATORS for America Act provides a comprehensive plan for uplifting the profession based on input from stakeholders across the education field about what is needed to recruit, prepare, and support educators." "As a proud mom of two Iowa public school students, I've seen firsthand the difference that a quality education from good educators can make in a child's life. And in the face of the most difficult school years in recent memory, we need to make sure we have the educators in place to continue supporting our students," **said Rep. Axne.** "We know that we need more educators, and that we need to do more to ensure our educators are supported once they're on the job. With this legislation, we invest in Iowa's educators —and by doing so, Iowa and our whole nation will see a monumental return on our investment."

"Our educators are the bedrock of our country's future, and they show up each and every day—pandemic or otherwise—to make sure our children get the education they deserve," **said Rep. Gallego.** "That is why it is imperative we recruit and cultivate a diverse, qualified educator workforce that touches all corners of our country. That's especially true in Arizona, where we have one of the worst teacher shortages in the country, affecting more than 1 in 4 classrooms. We are better off if we have more teachers, not less, and that is why I am proud to co-lead the comprehensive EDUCATORS for America Act so that states and communities have the tools they need to build a pipeline of diverse, highly-trained, and well-supported educators."

Rep. Hayes stated, "I joined my colleagues in support of the EDUCATORS for America Act because it addresses the multitude of concerns classroom teachers face every day. We need to recruit, prepare, and support current and future educators, with financial assistance, faculty development and capacity building, while ensuring equity, diversity, and inclusion. As a teacher, I understand the impact this bill will have on educators, students and the community."

Original Cosponsors in the House include **Representatives Scanlon, Sewell, Lamb, Sires, Leger Fernandez, and Michael F.Q. San Nicolas.**

Organizations endorsing the bill include the **American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education; American Association of State Colleges and Universities; American Association of School Personnel Administrators; American Federation of School Administrators; American Federation of Teachers; American Occupational Therapy Association; American Psychological Association; American Society for Engineering Education; Association of**

University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD); ASCD; ACTFL; Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL); Committee for Children; Council of Administrators of Special Education; Council for Exceptional Children; EDGE Consulting Partners; Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities; Higher Education Consortium for Special Education (HECSE); Learning Forward; National Association of Elementary School Principals; National Association of School Psychologists; National Association of Secondary School Principals; National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE); National Board for Professional Teaching Standards; National Center for Learning Disabilities; National Center for Teacher Residencies; National Council of Teachers of English; National Council of Teachers of Mathematics; National Education Association; National Indian Impacted Schools Association; National Institute for Excellence in Teaching; PDK International; Public Advocates; Public Advocacy for Kids; School Social Work Association of America; State Higher Education Executive Officers Association; STEM Education Coalition; Teach Plus; Teacher Education Council Of State Colleges And Universities; Teacher Education Division of the Council for Exceptional Children; The Arc of the United States; The California State University; Thurgood Marshall College Fund; UNCF (United Negro College Fund); University of Northern Iowa; and Vernier Software & Technology.

"AACTE enthusiastically supports the Educators for America Act and thanks Senator Reed and Representative Adams for their unwavering leadership in support of educator preparation. This comprehensive bill will make robust investments in teacher and other educator preparation programs while alleviating our nation's educator shortage, diversifying the profession, and providing critical support to our member institutions and their community partners." said **Dr. Lynn M. Gangone, President and CEO, American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education.**

"Educators across the country are burnt out, overwhelmed, and under-resourced, resulting in a massive teacher shortage that leaves students without permanent teachers in their classrooms and parents, caregivers and other school staff struggling to fill in the gaps. In order to adequately meet the needs of our kids, the educator workforce needs massive investment, from expanding teacher training and pipelines, recruiting diverse educators, and improving pay and benefits like loan forgiveness that help make teaching a more sustainable profession. The Educators for America bill takes a comprehensive approach to teacher prep and helps ensure educators and school staff get the time, tools, training and resources they need to support students," said **Randi Weingarten, AFT President.**

University of Northern Iowa President Mark A. Nook stated, "EDUCATORS for America represents a monumental step forward in the effort to grow, retain, and diversify our nation's educator workforce. With our roots in educator preparation, UNI appreciates the opportunity to help advance national policy to invest in our nation's educators and through them the quality of education our children receive."

"The American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) enthusiastically supports the EDUCATORS for America Act and its goals to strengthen teacher preparation programs, like those offered at regional comprehensive institutions, as well as grow and diversify the nation's teaching corps. AASCU, and its close to 400 members who prepare the majority of teachers for our nation's schools, understands the value and importance of well-prepared educators in shaping the lives of our children and in the development of our communities," said **American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) President and CEO, Mildred García, Ed.D.**

"School educators and principals are critical to ensuring all our nation's children have the high-quality opportunities necessary to thrive and succeed," said **National Association of Secondary School Principals CEO Ronn Nozoe**. "Congress must pass the Educators for America Act to strengthen the school leader pipeline so state and local school communities can continue to support student development and academic achievement."

"I applaud Senator Reed and Representative Adams for crafting a bill that will shore up the educator profession by attracting, preparing, and retaining educators, and specifically, for supporting new educators of color and educators with disabilities. This legislation offers a thoughtful and comprehensive solution to the current educator shortage crisis, including in high-needs areas such as special education," said **Dennis Cavitt, Ed.D, President, Council for Exceptional Children**.

"Great teaching matters. This legislation will help ensure that we educate and prepare more outstanding educators in the critical science, technology, engineering, and math subjects that our students need to compete in the global economy today and tomorrow," said **James Brown, Executive Director, STEM Education Coalition**.

"Without a robust and well-prepared educator workforce, including school psychologists, schools cannot truly meet the academic, social-emotional, and mental and behavioral needs of our students. NASP is proud to endorse the Educators for America Act, which would help states address issues in their educator workforce pipeline and ensure no students go without the education professionals that can help them thrive in school, at home, and in life," said **President of National Association of School Psychologists, Laurie Klose**.

[Additional quotes from endorsing organizations are available here.](#)

The EDUCATORS for America Act reflects the input from stakeholders across the education field about what is needed to recruit, prepare, and support educators. It addresses early outreach and career exploration, clinical preparation for teachers, principals and other educators, financial assistance, faculty development, and capacity building at the state and local levels with a focus on ensuring equity and diversity.

Specifically, the EDUCATORS for America Act calls for:

- Authorizing \$500 million annually for grants to support states in developing and implementing a statewide strategy for meeting their educator workforce needs, including ensuring an inclusive and equitable workforce that supports the recruitment, preparation, and retention of populations that are underrepresented in the field of education, including teachers of color, first-generation college students, and teachers with disabilities.
- Authorizing \$500 million annually to support educator preparation programs and partnerships including:
 - Updating and expanding the Teacher Quality Partnership Grant Program to focus on residency programs, strengthen the principal and school leader preparation programs, and enable partnerships to address the need for early childhood educators, school librarians, counselors, and other specialized support personnel.
 - Reauthorizing the Honorable Augustus F. Hawkins Centers of Excellence Program to support Historically Black Colleges and Universities and Minority-serving institutions in expanding and strengthening their educator preparation programs.
 - Providing recruitment and completion grants to educator preparation programs to ensure that students have the wrap-around supports they need to graduate.
 - Establishing an education careers opportunity program to expose middle and high school students to the education profession.
 - Increasing the capacity of educator preparation programs to meet the needs of the field, including supporting school leader development, faculty professional development and training, offering doctoral fellowships, and promoting innovation and resiliency.
- Streamlining the data and reporting requirements for teacher preparation programs to focus on key measures related to program quality and addressing identified workforce needs.
- Removing financial barriers to entering the education profession by:
 - Doubling the TEACH grants to \$8,000 per year and providing additional protections and options to prevent the conversion of grants to loans.
 - Including the costs of clinical experiences in the cost of attendance for awarding financial aid
 - Providing educators and teachers in high-needs fields credit towards loan repayment as they serve rather than waiting 5 to 10 years to earn forgiveness.

Congresswoman Alma S. Adams, Ph.D. represents North Carolina's 12th Congressional District (Charlotte, Mecklenburg County). She serves on the House Committee on Education and Labor, the House Agriculture Committee, and the House Financial Services Committee in

the 117th Congress. Before being elected to Congress, she served as a professor at Bennett College in Greensboro for four decades.

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