

Adams, Gallego, Sykes, Reed Introduce EDUCATORS for America Act to Strengthen our Teacher Workforce & Address School Staffing Shortages



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Date 2023-05-02 16:15



Hello Sarah,

Adams, Gallego, Sykes, Reed Introduce *EDUCATORS for America Act* to Strengthen our Teacher Workforce & Address School Staffing Shortages

*Bicameral bill to address teacher shortages would provide a big
boost for U.S. students, educators, & schools*

WASHINGTON, D.C. (May 2, 2023) -- In an effort to raise student achievement in the classroom, and rebuild the educator pipeline, **Congresswomen Alma Adams (NC-12) and Emilia Strong Sykes (OH-13)**, along with **Representative Ruben Gallego (AZ-03) U.S. Senators Jack Reed (D-RI), Bob Casey (D-PA), and Ben Ray Lujan (D-NM)** introduced *H.R. 2992*, the *EDUCATORS for America Act*, aimed at supporting the development and retention of effective educators. The announcement comes on May 2, National Teacher Appreciation Day.

[Text of the legislation is available here.](#)

[Audio of Rep. Adams' quote is available here.](#)

"As an educator for forty years, I know how hard our educators work, and how important they are to the future of our country. Unfortunately, aspiring teachers are often discouraged by high student debt, low salaries, and the lack of institutional support," said **Congresswoman Alma Adams, a member of the House Committee on Education and the Workforce**. "We can't let the Great Resignation and nationwide staffing shortages harm our children. That's why the *EDUCATORS for America Act* is so important. If passed, this legislation 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. Today's labor market is confusing, but we can't wait for the next generation of teachers to appear: we must act to recruit and retain qualified, hard-working teachers in the classroom. That's why I'm proud to introduce the *EDUCATORS for America Act* with Senator Reed and my House colleagues as partners."

"Educators are the foundation of our country's future, showing up day in and day out to ensure our children receive the education they deserve," said **Rep. Gallego**. "Arizona is in the midst of a teacher shortage, and it is imperative we recruit a diverse, qualified educator workforce. I'm proud to co-lead the comprehensive *EDUCATORS for America Act*, which equips states and communities with the tools they need to build a strong and well-supported educator pipeline."

"Every child in Northeast Ohio, no matter their background or where they live, deserves a high-quality education. The *EDUCATORS for America Act* will strengthen the educator pipeline to ensure all students and educators in Ohio's 13th Congressional District have the resources and the tools they need to succeed academically and professionally," said **Rep. Sykes**. "I'm proud to co-lead this comprehensive legislative package which will invest in our children and support the recruitment and retention of diverse, well-qualified educators across the country."

The bill would strengthen the educator workforce, address the shortage of teachers, and support comprehensive educator preparation. It would annually authorize \$500 million for grants to states that develop strategies to meet their educator workforce needs and another \$500 million to enhance educator preparation programs. The bill would also expand the Teacher Quality Partnership Program to expand programs for principals and address the need for specialized personnel, such as early childhood educators and counselors; reauthorize the Augustus F. Hawkins Centers of Excellence Program for teacher preparation efforts at historically Black colleges and universities and minority-serving institutions; and double federal TEACH grants to \$8,000 per year.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, more than 270,000 teachers were projected to leave the field each year between 2016 and 2026. The pandemic only accelerated this trend. At the same

time, enrollment in educator preparation programs is plummeting. School districts across the nation are struggling to fill positions. Two consecutive surveys conducted by the National Association of Secondary School Principals in 2021 and 2022 showed that nearly 40 percent of school principals planned to leave their jobs in the next few years. Moreover, the gap between the demographic makeup of the student body and the education profession is widening. Even though over 50 percent of students are people of color and multiple studies have shown racial diversity can provide significant benefits to students, a 2022 Department of Education report showed that 80 percent of public-school teachers identified as white, a figure that had barely changed since 2000.

The *EDUCATORS for America Act* calls for a \$1 billion annual investment to support states and local communities in building a new educator pipeline that will ensure that all schools have the diverse, profession-ready teachers, principals, librarians, counselors, and other specialized instructional support personnel they need to support student development and academic achievement.

“America needs a strong workforce of prepared teachers in order to bolster our economy and maintain our democracy,” said **Senator Reed**, a senior member of the Labor, Health and Human Service, and Education Appropriations Subcommittee, and a longtime 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.”

“When we invest in education, we invest in our future. The last few years have highlighted the need to better support our education system: we must address educator shortages and ensure educators have the resources they need to support the social, emotional, and academic growth of our students,” **Senator Casey** said. “The *EDUCATORS for America Act* would strengthen the teaching workforce by giving more people a pathway to the profession and helping schools support and retain them.”

“Teachers across America help students unlock their full potential, discover their interests, and pursue their dreams. To combat teacher shortages, it’s crucial that we support efforts to recruit, train, and retain our teachers, school leaders, and other support staff as part of our efforts to provide an excellent education for every child,” said **Senator Luján**. “I’m proud to introduce this legislation to support our educators and children in New Mexico.”

Under the proposed legislation, the \$1 billion annual investment in the educator pipeline would be evenly divided between state capacity building and direct support for educator preparation programs and partnerships with high need school districts. It addresses the full pipeline from early outreach and career exploration to financial assistance and wrap around supports for those pursuing education careers to clinical preparation for teachers, principals and other educators to faculty development, all with a focus on ensuring equity and diversity.

In the House, additional cosponsors include **Darren Soto (FL-09)**, **Shontel Brown (OH-11)**, **Suzanne Bonamici (OR-01)**, **Jamaal Bowman (NY-16)**, **Gwen Moore (WI-04)**, **Morgan McGarvey (KY-03)**, **Jill Tokuda (HI-02)**, **Andre Carson (IN-07)**, **Jill Tokuda (HI-02)**, **Ledger Fernandez (NM-03)**, and **Jahana Hayes (CT-05)**.

In addition to **Reed**, **Casey**, and **Luján**, the Senate version is cosponsored by **U.S. Senators Chris Van Hollen (D-MD)**, **Ron Wyden (D-OR)**, **Debbie Stabenow (D-MI)**, **Jeff Merkley (D-OR)**, and **Martin Heinrich (D-NM)**.

SUMMARY: *EDUCATORS for America Act (H.R. 2992)*

The legislation authorizes \$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

It further authorizes \$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, strengthening the

principal and school leader preparation programs, and enabling 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. Calls for the National Center for Education Statistics to convene an expert panel to make recommendations on a robust and concise set of national indicators on the size, diversity, and quality of the teacher workforce, and the equitable distribution of profession ready teachers

EDUCATORS removes 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
- Authorizing the Secretary make student loan payments on behalf of teachers, school leaders serving in high needs schools, and early childhood educators and forgiving the balance of their loans after five years of services.
- Providing incremental credit to all other educators, effectively providing loan forgiveness as they serve rather than after they complete 10 years of service.

Leading organizations endorsing the bill include: [AACTE \(American Association of Colleges and Universities\)](#); [American Association of State Colleges and Universities](#); [American Association of School Personnel Administrators](#); [American Federation of School Administrators](#); [American Federation of Teachers](#); [American Library Association](#); [American Occupational Therapy Association](#); [American Psychological Association](#); [American Society for Engineering Education](#); [Association of University Centers on Disabilities \(AUCD\)](#); [ASCD](#); [ACTFL](#); [California State University](#); [Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning \(CASEL\)](#); [Committee for Children](#); [Council of Administrators of Special Education](#); [Council for Exceptional Children](#); [Deans for Impact](#); [EDGE Consulting Partners](#); [Higher Education Consortium for Special Education \(HECSE\)](#); [Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities](#); [Learning Forward](#); [National Association for Music Education](#); [National Association of Elementary School Principals](#); [National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities](#); [National Association of School Psychologists](#); [National Association of Secondary School Principals](#); [National Association of State Directors of Special Education \(NASDSE\)](#); [National Association for Family, School, and Community Engagement](#); [National Board for Professional Teaching Standards](#); [National Center for Learning Disabilities](#); [National Council of Teachers of English](#); [National Council of Teachers of Mathematics](#); [National Center for Teacher Residencies \(NCTR\)](#); [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](#); [Thurgood Marshall College Fund](#); [UNCF \(United Negro College Fund\)](#); [University of Northern Iowa](#); and [Vernier Software & Technology](#).

What leading education professionals are saying about the **EDUCATORS for America Act**:

“Our nation’s schools are struggling with severe and chronic educator shortages for many reasons, including challenging work environments, low pay, and an overall lack of professional respect. All students deserve qualified and caring educators who have the resources and supports to uncover the passions and potential of every child. The *Educators for America Act* will strengthen the recruitment and the preparation of a diverse set of candidates into the classroom and into leadership roles. We are grateful to Senator Reed and Representative Adams for their leadership in re-introducing this bill, and we hope the Congress moves forward on addressing what is now a national crisis,” said **Marc Egan, Director of Government Relations, National Education Association**.

“PDK International is proud to support the *Educators for America Act* and the establishment of the Pipeline to Educator Preparation Program. Providing support and opportunities for students of color to enter the teaching profession is crucial to diversifying the educator workforce; the *Educators for America Act* helps make that happen,” said **Albert Chen, Acting CEO, PDK International**.

“Senator Reed and Representative Adams have thoughtfully drafted a bill responsive to current needs within the educator profession by providing solutions that draw people to the profession, provide quality preparation, and support retention while targeting supports to new educators of color and educators with disabilities to ensure the field is more representative of the populations they serve,” said **Angie Jasper, Ed.D, President of the Council for Exceptional Children**. “I further applaud them for prioritizing high-needs subject areas such as special education, which requires meaningful new investments to reverse the persistent shortages we face as a field.”

“The Teacher Education Council of State Colleges and Universities (TECSCU) strongly supports the *Educators for America Act*. This legislation will address the teacher pipeline with financial incentives and protections as well as maintains funding for innovative practices in educator preparation,” said **Dr. Laurie Mullen, President, TECSCU**.

“Educators have experienced some of the most stressful, emotionally challenging teaching and learning conditions during their time in schools over the past several years. We cannot expect them to carry on their important work, much less thrive and be successful without some increased support. With that in mind, Committee for Children wholeheartedly supports the *Educators for America Act*, which seeks to strengthen and expand educator preparation programs that embed training that’ll help teacher, school leader, and principal candidates get ahead of stress, work better together, and build emotional wellbeing for themselves as they enter the school building,” said **Andrea Lovanhill, CEO, Committee for Children**.

“The largest challenges we’re facing right now are teacher and principal shortages and educator burnout,” said **National Association of Secondary School Principals CEO Ronn Nozoe**. “Our recent national survey found that half of school leaders claim their stress level is so high they are considering a career change or retirement. Senator Reed and Representative Adams’ legislation would create transformative progress towards hiring more excellent educators and keeping them in our schools, and NASSP members are eager to work with Congress to get this passed.”

“In the wake of the pandemic, legislation that provides critical investments in recruiting, preparing, and retaining a diverse educator workforce is essential. This is particularly true for subjects such as music and the arts which have historically lacked educator diversity. The National Association for Music Education is a proud supporter of the *EDUCATORS for America Act* and applaud Senator Reed and Representative Adams for their work to strengthen and expand the educator pipeline,” said **Scott R. Sheehan, President, National Association for Music Education**.

“Every student deserves well-prepared teachers that honor and nurture their limitless potential, brilliance, and full humanity. To ensure more aspiring teachers, and particularly aspiring teachers of color, are supported to reach and engage their students, pathways into teaching must be affordable, practice-based, and focused on instruction. DFI applauds the introduction of the *EDUCATORS for America Act* as a tool for expanding access to such pathways,” said **Valerie Sakimura, Executive Director, Deans for Impact**.

“Central Washington University enthusiastically supports the *EDUCATORS for America Act* as we seek to address the urgent need for diversification, growth, and retention in our nation’s educator workforce. CWU is committed to developing future generations of

teachers, staff, and administrators who are more representative of the students they serve, and we support urgent policy action that will help us — and other institutions — make progress toward this goal. We are pleased to see the continued support of this legislation since it was first introduced the 117th Congress. By making this critical investment now, we can improve the quality, quantity, and diversity in our educational leadership ranks, while ensuring that students across the country receive the education they deserve,” said **Jim Wohlpart, President, Central Washington University.**

“On behalf of world language educators across this country, I want to thank Senator Reed and Representative Adams for introducing the *EDUCATORS for America Act*,” said **Howie Berman, Executive Director of ACTFL**, which represents more than 12,000 language educators in the U.S. and abroad. “World language is currently experiencing a critical shortage of qualified teachers in at least 44 states and the District of Columbia, and this legislation is an important step to ensuring that this country has a well-trained, diverse educator workforce for years to come.”

“Education is facing the largest crisis in a generation with regards to staffing schools with not only qualified teachers, but all school personnel. It is more important than ever to support initiatives and strategies that will help build the pipeline for the future; AASPA thanks Senator Reed and Representative Adams for their leadership on this,” said **Kelly Coash-Johnson, Executive Director of the American Association of School Personnel Administrators.**

“The National Center for Teacher Residencies (NCTR) is proud to endorse the *Educators for America Act*, a bill that reflects a comprehensive approach to addressing and supporting teacher preparation needs across the country. Specifically, the bill provides significant opportunity for the development, implementation, and scale of teacher residency programs, which are an evidence-based approach to recruiting, preparing, and supporting a diverse and effective teacher workforce that stays in the profession. As districts and states continue to struggle with teacher shortages and diversifying the teacher workforce, the *Educators for America Act* will provide essential resources and support to accelerate these and other high quality models to teacher training and growing the teacher pipeline,” said **Dr. Kathlene H. Campbell, CEO, National Center for Teacher Residencies (NCTR).**

“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, Celeste Malone.**

“The education workforce is facing the twin pressures of more educators leaving the profession while fewer people are choosing to become educators. The predictable result is schools across the country, and especially in rural areas, are struggling to fill a full range of staff positions. The *EDUCATORS for America Act* is a much-needed national investment in school leaders and staff so students can be supported by the qualified professionals they need to succeed,” said **NAESP Executive Director L. Earl Franks, Ed.D., CAE.**

“The persistent critical shortage of high quality educators in the U.S. impedes districts’ and schools’ ability to serve students with disabilities.” said **Dr. Jacqueline Rodriguez, CEO of the National Center for Learning Disabilities.** “NCLD enthusiastically commends Senator Reed and Representative Adams for their unparalleled leadership on this important legislation. The *EDUCATORS for America Act* provides the framework to address both issues of equity and quality in the preparation of educators and tackles key needs of the educator workforce.”

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