

HOUSE Impact Aid Letter

Help Federally Impacted Schools: Support Funding for Impact Aid

Dear Colleague,

We invite you to join the below letter encouraging the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education to support strong funding for Impact Aid. The deadline to sign on is Friday, March 18.

Impact Aid provides direct, flexible funding to over 1,300 school districts, and supports school needs including facilities renovation, programs to retain highly qualified teachers, and transportation for students. Impact Aid is critical for schools with high numbers of children from military families or children who reside on Indian lands, and schools where federal activity has reduced the available tax base. We urge you to support this important bipartisan effort to support our schools and provide tax relief for local communities. The letter supports funding for all line items of Impact Aid, including Federal Properties which was zeroed out in the President's budget.

If you have questions or would like to sign on, please contact:

Nicole with Rep. Williams (Nicole.Lansford@mail.house.gov),

Jacob with Rep. LoBiondo (jacob.schanzenbach@mail.house.gov),

Andrew with Rep. Noem (Andrew.Christianson@mail.house.gov),

Matt with Rep. Larsen (Matt.Renninger@mail.house.gov),

Ken with Rep. Kirkpatrick (ken.montoya@mail.house.gov), or

Andres with Rep. Davis (Andres.Perez@mail.house.gov).

Sincerely,

Roger Williams
Member of Congress

Ann Kirkpatrick
Member of Congress

Frank LoBiondo
Member of Congress

Rick Larsen
Member of Congress

Kristi Noem
Member of Congress

Susan Davis
Member of Congress

March XX, 2016

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chairman
Subcommittee on LHHSED
Committee on Appropriations
2358-B Rayburn HOB
Washington DC, 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on LHHSED
Committee on Appropriations
1016 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Cole and Ranking Member DeLauro:

We urge you to recognize the importance of the Federal Impact Aid Program as you set the Appropriation Subcommittee's funding priorities for Fiscal Year (FY) 2017. Thank you for prioritizing the program in the FY 2016 Omnibus. We fully recognize the fiscal restraint that will govern the Subcommittee's actions this year, but we request strong and continued funding for all line items of the Impact Aid Program, including Basic Support and Federal Properties, to ensure all federally connected school districts can provide a quality education.

Congress created Impact Aid in 1950 in recognition that the federal government needed to accept responsibility in areas impacted by a federal presence and help meet the local responsibility of financing public education. Impact Aid provides a payment in lieu of taxes to local school districts for lost revenue that is a result of tax-exempt federal property and actions that have increased expenditures due to the enrollment of federally connected children. The program provides direct, flexible funding to over 1,300 school districts. Impact Aid funds a range of programs, including facilities renovation, programs to retain highly qualified teachers, adequate technology, and maintenance of transportation fleets. For many districts, this funding represents the very lifeblood that allows their school systems to operate.

For districts enrolling military children, the ability to address both the academic and emotional needs of these students must be maintained. Education is a quality-of-life issue for military families, and it is our firm belief that as military personnel defend our country we must not forget or ignore the children they leave behind.

The needs of districts enrolling children who reside on Indian lands—of whom over 93 percent are Native American—also must not be overlooked. These districts strive to find creative ways to integrate curriculum and best practices to prepare students for success. Often, these school districts are located in rural areas with few taxpayers and where administrators double as bus drivers, teachers, and coaches. These dollars provide a foundational education program for all students; many schools would close their doors without the support of Impact Aid.

The Administration's FY 2017 budget proposal level-funds Impact Aid Basic Support. Congress should prioritize this funding stream to ensure the current payout level to school districts is maintained.

The Administration's FY 2017 budget proposal recommends the elimination of funding for Federal Properties for the fifth year in a row. This was done despite Congress' continued support

for the program. Federal Properties school districts depend on Impact Aid due to a limited local tax base caused by the presence of certain federal land in their districts, including national parks and grasslands, national laboratories, Army Corps of Engineering projects, and property that encompasses the military academies. In some of these communities, the federal government is the largest landowner, which significantly diminishes a school district's revenue base. Congress should prioritize this funding stream to reflect the addition of eligible Federal Property school districts.

We realize the Subcommittee will be working under significant budget constraints. However, we urge you to support continued funding for the entire Impact Aid Program. While the funding increase in FY 2016 was welcome relief for these constituencies, the potential of long-term funding stagnation is of serious concern given the changing needs of the program and the students they serve. Impact Aid is not only the federal government's obligation, but also a tax relief program for local communities. Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of our request.

Sincerely,