

March 17, 2020

United States Congress
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representatives and Senators:

The undersigned groups of national organizations involved in providing elementary and secondary education to the nation's public school students are gravely concerned with the Families First Coronavirus Response Act's (H.R. 6201) inequitable treatment of state and local government agencies that are specifically excluded from the benefits of payroll tax credit for "emergency paid leave" for our public employees affected by the coronavirus. We are requesting equal financial treatment under the emergency appropriations bill for our pandemic-related paid employee leave expenditures.

Just like businesses and nonprofit agencies, state and local government employers will be providing emergency family and medical paid leave and emergency paid sick leave. But under the Family First Coronavirus Response Act unlike businesses and nonprofit agencies, state and local government employers, including school districts, are expressly prohibited from offsetting these additional personnel costs against our employer share of Social Security payroll withholding payments [see section 7001(e)(4) and 7003(e)(4) of H.R. 6201]. Ironically, private and parochial schools, as nonprofit agencies, would financially benefit from the proposed tax credits, along with private sector businesses, while public school districts, along with other state and local government employers, would be excluded from the payroll tax credits.

Our national organizations are requesting immediate action to correct this disparate treatment of state and local governments, which employ a sizeable segment of the nation's workforce and need federal financial assistance to address the outbreak of the virus and keep our students, our communities and our staff safe.

Thank you for considering this essential revision to the pending second supplemental appropriations bill.

Sincerely,

AASA, The School Superintendents Association
American Federation of Teachers
Association of Educational Service Agencies
Council of Chief State School Officers
Council of the Great City Schools
National Education Association
National Rural Education Association
National School Boards Association