

United States Senate

August 5, 2021

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C 20510

Dear Majority Leader Schumer:

As you craft legislation that scales up the federal investment in our nation's infrastructure, we urge you to include strong and robust funding that will help states and school districts maintain, upgrade, and build new school facilities.

As Senators for the State of California, we represent more than 6.1 million children across approximately 10,378 public schools—both in urban and rural areas. We have visited classrooms and have seen firsthand how reduced investments in our public education system has led to overcrowded classrooms, teacher layoffs, and unacceptable learning environments for our children.

Many of our students are learning in old, outdated, and unhealthy classrooms. The ongoing coronavirus pandemic, in particular, has shown us how important schools are for the health and wellbeing of our students, and their success. It has been reported that many schools are in dire need of improving their ventilation systems in order to mitigate the spread of viruses like COVID-19. However, these are not the only significant repairs that need to be made, as other environmental hazards—such as asbestos and lead—need to be addressed as well, in addition to technological improvements that create classrooms more conducive to learning in the 21st Century.


In 2018, the State of California conducted a needs assessment that found urgent and shovel-ready projects required an estimated \$3 billion to move forward. We also continue to hear from local school districts how imperative it is to upgrade schools. For example, the Los Angeles Unified School District—which is the nation's second-largest district—has identified that it needs \$50 billion to address school facilities and technology needs.

We, like many, believe that schools are economic drivers that prepare students for the future and the buildings where they learn provide the foundation for a high-quality educational experience. In addition, school construction leads to the creation of thousands of jobs and supports major industries that produce


equipment, fixtures, furniture, and other materials for constructing and modernizing our schools. And for every \$1 billion invested in school construction, nearly 18,000 jobs are created.

Such an investment would be a historic step toward improving our nation's schools and promoting access to a high-quality education that prepares them for success in school and beyond. We look forward to working with you to ensure that this critical funding is included in any infrastructure package that moves forward, and ensuring that California gets its fair share.

Sincerely,



Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator



Alex Padilla
United States Senator