

## **The School Building Improvement Act of 2017**

*Senator Jack Reed*

*Senator Sherrod Brown*

High-quality, safe, and modern school facilities are essential to student achievement. They also support and enhance the health, well-being, and learning experience of the over 50 million students who attend our public schools, the six million staff who work in schools, and the neighborhoods and environments where they are located.

School facility quality also plays an important role in educational equity. Yet, too often, the way we finance school infrastructure leaves disadvantaged school districts without enough resources to tackle sub-par facilities.

While there is not comprehensive data on condition every school building across the county, the data we have paints a stark picture. A 2014 [Department of Education study](#) estimated that it would cost \$197 billion to bring all public schools into “good” condition. Nationally, there is also a \$38 billion funding gap in annual capital construction and new facility funding, as reported in the [2016 State of Our Schools report](#).

This need has generated widespread public support for improving school buildings in communities across the county not just because of the benefits for student and teachers but also because of job creation and economic growth it brings. In fact, K–12 facility infrastructure is an important part of our construction economy, accounting for nearly a quarter of state and local infrastructure investments, second only to highways. Despite the benefits and need, however, federal funding for accounts for 0.2% of the total current capital investment in our schools.

The School Building Improvement Act of 2017 will provide a total of \$100 billion in direct grants and school construction bonds over 10 years to help fill the \$38 billion annual gap in school facility capital construction need. It would also create an estimated [1.9 million jobs](#), based on analysis that each \$1 billion spent on construction creates 17,785 jobs.

### **The School Building Improvement Act:**

- Provides competitive grants for school repair, renovation, and construction. These grants focus assistance on states and communities with the greatest financial need, encourage green construction practices, establish equitable access for public charter schools, contain state matching criteria, and outline permissible criteria for spending. Projects also requires the use of American-made iron, steel, and manufactured products.
- Provides \$30 billion for Qualified School Infrastructure Bonds (QSIBs), \$10 billion each for FY 2018 through FY 2020.
- Expands Qualified Zone Academy Bonds (QZAB) for use on school construction.
- Requires the GAO to report on projects carried out under the within two years after enactment with periodic updates.
- Creates a comprehensive study of the physical condition of public schools at least once every five years.
- Provides a temporary increase of \$100 million for Impact Aid construction.

This legislation is supported by:

Rebuild America's Schools  
American Federation of Teachers  
Californians for School Facilities  
Council of the Great City Schools  
International Union of Operating Engineers  
National Association of Elementary School Principals.  
National Association of Federally Impacted Schools  
National Association of Secondary School Principals  
National Education Association  
National Parent Teacher Association  
North America's Building Trades Unions