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1969 - 2009

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Edward Kealy, Executive Director
Committee for Education Funding

January 27, 2009

Dear Member of Congress:

The Committee for Education Funding (CEF), a non-partisan coalition of more than 90 organizations reflecting the broad spectrum of the education community, strongly supports the *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009* released by congressional leaders in the House and Senate, and the Obama Administration, and urges you to vote in support of this critical piece of legislation. The recovery package contains unprecedented investments in education and leverages federal education funding as part of a national recovery plan.

The economic recovery package invests more than \$120 billion in our nation's teachers and students and strengthens our schools, colleges, and libraries. The package would retrain displaced and unemployed workers, create new jobs by modernizing the country's classrooms, and increase America's competitiveness in the global economy. It also will provide \$79 billion in much needed relief to states, colleges, and schools who are facing historic budget shortfalls and prevent draconian cuts to critical education programs.

The legislation would provide an additional \$13 billion for Title I formula grants that would help disadvantaged students struggling to meet the ambitious goals of the NCLB Act. It also would provide an additional \$13 billion to fund the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), increasing the federal share of educating students with disabilities from 17 percent to 27 percent. This would mark the largest step the federal government has taken to fulfill its promise of funding 40 percent of the national average per pupil expenditure, an action that will provide much needed relief to state and local budgets.

The package would provide \$20 billion for the renovation and modernization of America's schools and institutions of higher education, including technology upgrades and energy efficiency improvements. Providing these funds would improve 10,000 schools and enrich the learning environments of approximately seven million students. Funding these shovel-ready projects also could help create 250,000 new jobs and save billions of dollars in energy costs.

The bill also will help fund education for homeless children and youth affected by the foreclosure crisis and provide additional support for early childhood development, including Head Start. It provides crucial investments in our nation's future by increasing the maximum Pell Grant award, College Work-Study programs, and important funding for advanced research projects and science facilities. All of these actions will help prepare students for the jobs of tomorrow and develop the technologies that will drive the American economy in the future.

The Committee for Education Funding urges Congress to pass this legislation swiftly to put our nation's economy on the road to recovery. We greatly appreciate this commitment to education and America's students, and we look forward to both chambers passing a final bill that would provide the highest level of funding for education. When our students succeed, our nation succeeds!

Sincerely,



Deborah Rigsby
President



Edward R. Kealy, Ph.D.
Executive Director