May 14, 2020

Californian Congressional Delegation,

On behalf of our 310,000 California educators, education support professionals, and the 6 million students of this great state, we urge your support of the HEROES Act. The $3 trillion package would provide needed additional education funding (pre-k through higher education), state and local aid, a second round of stimulus checks, meal assistance and other safety net programs for workers and vulnerable populations.

The center of the bill is $915 billion in relief for states and local governments to pay vital workers such as first responders, health workers, and educators who are at risk of losing jobs from massive budget shortfalls that were not projected, stemming from the public health emergency and its negative economic impacts.

California’s Governor and Legislature have been responsible in managing our state budget over the last many years, but nothing can prepare any state for the devastation that has happened and will continue to happen because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Over the next two years, California’s education budget could be slashed by over $18 billion. If this occurs, it will erase five to six years of gains that were made after the Great Recession and take us back to 2013-14 funding levels. California public schools and the students and families we serve will not be able to weather impending state budget cuts if California and the states do not receive additional federal assistance.

During the last recession, California lost over 33,000 educators. As we fight the COVID-19 virus and plan for the safe reopening of schools, we need to retain all our educators and education support professionals. School closures, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, have demonstrated more than ever the vital role that schools play in society, and that educators play in the lives of students and their families. Returning to school in person requires new health and safety protocols, e.g. personal protective equipment for students and staff, physical distancing in classrooms and buses, enhanced cleaning protocols, considerations around staggered scheduling, and school nurses and counselors (many of whom were laid off following the last recession). We need more resources not less.

We urge you to pass the HEROES Act now because we cannot wait for help. Schools, students and families are suffering. We need federal assistance to continue vital services so we may successfully fight the COVID-19 pandemic now and rebuild our economy for the future of all Californians.

Sincerely,

E. Toby Boyd
CTA President