



National Association of Federally Impacted Schools (NAFIS)

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Dear Representative:

In advance of floor consideration of the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, also known as the “Student Success Act (SSA) of 2015,” we write to express our views on Title IV, Impact Aid.

NAFIS represents over 1,300 Impact Aid-recipient school districts nationwide, serving over 11 million students, Federal and non-Federal. Impact Aid is the oldest elementary and secondary education program and is a partnership between local communities and the Federal government where there is significant non-taxable property, such as military installations, Indian Treaty or Trust land, low-rent housing facilities, national parks and laboratories. Congress recognized in 1950 that the Federal government had an obligation to help meet the local responsibility of financing public education in areas impacted by a Federal presence. That same recognition holds true today.

SSA, Title IV, Impact Aid, incorporates a majority of the changes proposed by Representatives Noem, Dold, Larsen, and Takai in the Local Taxpayer Relief Act, H.R. 1318. In general, the SSA would provide greater flexibility and funding stability to federally impacted schools, facilitate timely payments, establish a hold harmless to prevent potential funding cliffs, and correct several inequities in current law. Specifically, we are pleased to see the SSA makes permanent a set of critical technical changes that were enacted via the Fiscal Year 2012 National Defense Authorization Act. This includes a change to the Federal Properties formula that has already proven to speed up payments and reduce the administrative burden on school districts. We support the elimination of the seven-year “lockout” provision that prevents eligible school districts from receiving Impact Aid. In addition, the bill equally prorates Basic Support payments when dollars are sufficient to fund each school district’s “need-based” or LOT payment. The bill allows school districts to take a current-year count if Federal student enrollment increases significantly due to a Federal action (e.x. Base Realignment and Closure) or school closure.

In addition to the comments related to Impact Aid, NAFIS opposes school vouchers, including those targeted specifically toward federally impacted students, like the CHOICE Act. Additionally, we oppose Title I portability. We are opposed to the caps on authorization levels for Title programs, including Impact Aid.

Thank you for considering our comments. Please contact us with any questions.

Sincerely,

Hilary Goldmann
Executive Director

Jocelyn Bissonnette
Government Affairs Director