



National Association of Federally Impacted Schools

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February 25, 2019

The Honorable Robert Scott
United States House of Representatives
203 Ford House Office Building
Washington, DC 20002

The Honorable Jack Reed
United States Senate
728 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20002

Dear Chairman Scott and Senator Reed:

On behalf of the National Association of Federally Impacted Schools (NAFIS), we write to express our support for the Rebuild America's Schools Act of 2019. NAFIS represents the 1,200-plus Impact Aid-recipient school districts nationwide that educate more than 10 million students. The Impact Aid program replaces the lost local tax revenue associated with the presence of non-taxable Federal property such as military installations, Indian lands, low-rent housing, and national parks and laboratories.

NAFIS is especially pleased to see that funding for Impact Aid is a priority under Title IV. Federally impacted districts face the unique challenge of limited local tax revenue (and in turn, limited or non-existent bonding capacity) due to the presence of nontaxable Federal property. School districts are educating students in facilities with health and safety code violations, or that are more than 100 years old. Specific needs include overcrowding, tornado shelters, leaky roofs, cracked foundations, expired boilers, and more. In a 2017 survey of 218 federally impacted districts¹, NAFIS identified \$13 billion in unmet construction need, including \$4.2 billion in pressing need.

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, including funds for school construction. That same recognition holds true today; however, annual appropriations for Impact Aid Construction (Section 7007) have been stagnant at around \$17 million for over a decade. A \$500 million infusion of funds, as proposed, could be easily allocated – the program and staff capacity already exist – to address the significant backlog of facility needs.

We look forward to continue working with you and your colleagues to identify the cost of capital construction needs for federally impacted schools, and to address the unmet needs with adequate Federal funds. Thank you for making these school districts, and the students they serve, a priority.

Sincerely,

Hilary Goldmann
Executive Director

Leslie Finnan
Director of Policy & Advocacy

¹ <https://www.nafisdc.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/2017-school-construction-report.pdf>

THE NAFIS FAMILY

FLISA

Federal Lands Impacted
Schools Association

MISA

Military Impacted
Schools Association

MTLLS

Mid-to-Low-LOT
Schools

NIISA

National Indian Impacted
Schools Association