

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

October 7, 2021

Governor Ron DeSantis  
State of Florida  
The Capitol  
400 S. Monroe Street  
Tallahassee, FL 32399

The Honorable Richard Corcoran  
Commissioner  
Florida Department of Education  
Turlington Building, Suite 1514  
325 West Gaines Street  
Tallahassee, FL 32399

RE: Urge Expeditious Distribution of American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Funds Now that State has Finally Applied for All Federal Emergency Relief

Dear Governor DeSantis and Commissioner Corcoran:

After many months of inexplicable delay by the State of Florida, we are pleased that the State of Florida has finally submitted a plan to draw down the federal emergency aid for public schools that was passed by Congress in the American Rescue Plan (ARP) seven months ago. Under ARP, Congress and President Biden provided Florida students, educators and schools \$7.4 billion to support school districts' efforts to lift Florida K-12 public schools and address gaps caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Congress required that "[e]ach State shall make allocations to local educational agencies in an expedited and timely manner, and, to the extent practicable, not later than 60 days after the receipt of such funds". Despite constant pleas from parents and educators, the State unfortunately slow-walked these dollars.

We are grateful that the U.S. Department of Education nudged the State of Florida on Monday to draw down these vital resources as Florida was the *only* state that had failed to apply for the remainder of the ARP Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funding. The delay was fiscally irresponsible and wrong. It needlessly put Florida children at a disadvantage compared to children in other states. These resources are especially important in a state that is ranked 46<sup>th</sup> in per pupil support for students.

Keeping our children and educators safe in the middle of the pandemic is paramount. The State's misguided focus on penalizing local school board members and educators for temporary safety protocols during a pandemic also is misguided. Instead, Florida should be doing all it can to use all available resources to lift our students and educators in a myriad of beneficial ways by getting out the first 2/3 of ESSER funds to school districts.

We once again urge you to make up for lost ground. Put the health and the safety of our Florida students first and release *all* of our federal funds to schools today.

Sincerely,



Kathy Castor  
Member of Congress



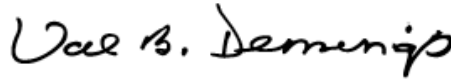
Stephanie Murphy  
Member of Congress



Debbie Wasserman Schultz  
Member of Congress



Charlie Crist  
Member of Congress



Val Demings  
Member of Congress



Frederica S. Wilson  
Member of Congress



Al Lawson  
Member of Congress



Lois Frankel  
Member of Congress



Ted Deutch  
Member of Congress



Darren Soto  
Member of Congress