

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

August 5, 2021

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

The Honorable Wilton Simpson  
President  
409 The Capitol  
404 South Monroe Street  
Tallahassee, FL 32399

The Honorable Chris Sprowls  
Speaker  
Florida House of Representatives  
420 The Capitol  
402 South 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 State of Florida to Distribute K-12 American Rescue Plan Emergency Funding for In-person Learning for the Fall – Students, Schools and Educators Need Support Now

Dear Governor DeSantis, President Simpson, Speaker Sprowls and Commissioner Corcoran:

President Biden signed the American Rescue Plan (ARP) into law on March 11, 2021. The ARP provides Florida school districts with \$7.4 billion to help schools reopen safely and meet students' academic and health needs in response to COVID-19. Two-thirds of the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER III) funds were immediately available to states, while the remainder of funds were made available following state submittal of ESSER implementation plans by June 7, 2021. *Florida missed the deadline, but it's not too late to provide Florida school districts the funding they desperately need to help our students learn and thrive in a healthy and safe environment*, especially as Florida is now the epicenter of COVID-19 in its more infectious form. We urge you to expeditiously release all federal funds – including the remaining ESSER funds Florida Congressional Democratic members called for in [March](#).

Importantly, we also urge you to submit Florida's state plan to the Department of Education (ED) to claim our state's full ESSER III dollars. We have worked in Congress to provide timely and much-needed emergency aid to our local communities and schools including through the ARP, which provided the largest one-time federal investment in K-12 education in our nation's history. Over the past year, Congress has invested roughly \$200 billion to help K-12 schools safely reopen, stay open, and address lost time in the classroom. We have listened to our parents, teachers, non-instructional personnel, school board members, our school districts and the [Florida Education Association](#) (FEA). All agree that students and public schools are in dire need of

additional resources to operate safely, address student academic achievement, and keep teachers and other essential personnel on the job.

The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and the delays in receiving federal emergency aid have created budget pressures for many Florida school districts. Florida schools are facing extensive unexpected costs as a direct result of the public health crisis. Across the state of Florida, school districts are contemplating how to keep students and educators safe, make up for learning losses, attract talented educators, and implement safety protocols with hand sanitizer, air purifiers and PPE. You are forcing some school districts to consider drastic cuts that would prove harmful to our students in the long run. Unfortunately, the State of Florida's pattern of delay in withholding federal emergency aid likely will increase the negative impact on our school districts, eventually costing taxpayers more money or leading to additional budget harm. It does not have to be this way.

Through the ARP, CRRSA, and CARES, Congress has directed over \$15 billion in federal emergency aid to Florida that is intended to support our students and educators immediately without unnecessary bureaucratic hurdles. As FEA underlines, "We all can agree that our students, regardless of where they come from, what they look like or where they live, deserve the best education possible so that they can pursue their dreams." We urge you to expedite releasing federal emergency funds to our local public schools, submit Florida's ARP ESSER state plan, put the needs of our families and students first, and work with us to ensure that Florida students thrive and meet their full potential. They deserve no less.

Sincerely,



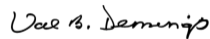
Kathy Castor  
Member of Congress



Lois Frankel  
Member of Congress



Frederica S. Wilson  
Member of Congress



Val Butler Demings  
Member of Congress



Al Lawson, Jr.  
Member of Congress



Darren Soto  
Member of Congress



Stephanie Murphy  
Member of Congress



Ted Deutch  
Member of Congress



Debbie Wasserman Schultz  
Member of Congress

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Charlie Crist". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Charlie" and the last name "Crist" clearly distinguishable.

Charlie Crist  
Member of Congress