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August 3, 2021

The Honorable Kathy Castor
4144 N. Armenia Ave.
Tampa, FL 33607

Dear Representative Castor,

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. The passage of the three stimulus packages by Congress during this pandemic promised school districts and states the funding they desperately need to help our students learn and thrive in a healthy and safe environment as we all work to move past the pandemic. On behalf of the members of the Florida Education Association, we thank Congress for passing the ESSER programs, which total \$10.9 billion to support Florida's K- 12 students and public schools.

Unfortunately, there has been a pattern of delay in releasing these vital federal funds to the local school districts. For this reason, I am writing to you today to ask for your help in persuading Florida's governor to release the remaining funds in the state's possession and complete the required ESSER plan so that the federal government can distribute the remaining funds to the state for use in our school districts.

We had high hopes that as Covid numbers dropped this spring, our kids would have summer programs and supports to prepare them for the upcoming school year. The federal funding that these packages provided would have helped tremendously, but due to inaction by Governor Ron DeSantis, the funding was not fully available to school districts.

Now, with Covid infections rising at an alarming rate as schools are set to open, our districts could use these funds to ensure that our children are safe and all the precautions needed to protect them are in place. Additionally, our students need extra support to overcome the impact Covid has had on them – academically and mentally.

Please use whatever means you have to help us keep Florida's children safe and healthy as we work hard to keep the learning going in their neighborhood schools. Call on Governor DeSantis to act quickly to ensure the federal funds are available to Florida's school districts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andrew Spac". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending from the end.

President, Florida education Association