



American Federation  
of Teachers, AFL-CIO

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AFT Teachers  
AFT PSRP  
AFT Higher Education  
AFT Public Employees  
AFT Nurses and Health  
Professionals

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Washington, DC 20001  
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May 14, 2018

The Honorable Virginia Foxx  
Chairwoman  
and  
The Honorable Robert Scott  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Education & the Workforce  
U.S House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairwoman Foxx and Ranking Member Scott:

On behalf of the 1.7 million members of the American Federation of Teachers, including thousands of members of the Asociación de Maestros de Puerto Rico who live in and work as teachers in Puerto Rico, we urge you to ensure that the \$589 million you appropriated for Puerto Rico's students and schools to restart school operations in Puerto Rico, which the US Department of Education has just announced, is spent as Congress intended. This money was intended to help Puerto Rico recover and return to stability after Hurricane Maria, and specifically, to help existing schools restore their operations.

As you likely know, over the objections of many parents, educators, mayors, small businesses and other community members, Puerto Rico's Secretary of Education plans to close nearly 40 percent of its public schools, while at the same time opening many new charter schools. We have grave concerns about the damage this will do to the island's educational and economic recovery. And given that this plan is precisely what Education Secretary Betsy DeVos' advocates—to defund and destabilize public schools, while rewarding those who want to make a profit on the backs of public school students—we believe the department's decision-making processes require oversight.

That is why, while we are pleased that Puerto Rico was provided nearly \$600 million in education funding for disaster recovery, we are worried that this money will disproportionately go to charter operators or will simply never make it to the schools it was intended to help. On behalf of the AFT and AMPR, we respectfully request that you do everything in your power to ensure this money is used to restart existing school operations—for example, by helping repair schools that were devastated by the hurricane, helping them replace textbooks and other ruined instructional materials, and helping the school system replace hardware and software.

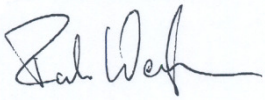
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Sincerely,



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Aida Díaz de Rodríguez  
President  
Asociación de Maestros de Puerto Rico

RW:emc opeiu#2 afl-cio

cc: Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, & Pensions; Senate Committee on Homeland Security & Government Affairs; Senate Committee on Appropriations; House Committee on Natural Resources; House Committee on Appropriations



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May 14, 2018

The Honorable Rodney Frelinghuysen  
Chairman  
and  
The Honorable Nita Lowey  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Frelinghuysen and Ranking Member Lowey:

On behalf of the 1.7 million members of the American Federation of Teachers, including thousands of members of the Asociación de Maestros de Puerto Rico who live in and work as teachers in Puerto Rico, we urge you to ensure that the \$589 million you appropriated for Puerto Rico's students and schools to restart school operations in Puerto Rico, which the US Department of Education has just announced, is spent as Congress intended. This money was intended to help Puerto Rico recover and return to stability after Hurricane Maria, and specifically, to help existing schools restore their operations.

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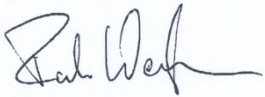
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RW:emc opeiu#2 afl-cio

cc: Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, & Pensions; Senate Committee on Homeland Security & Government Affairs; Senate Committee on Appropriations; House Committee on Natural Resources; House Committee on Education & the Workforce



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May 14, 2018

The Honorable Richard Shelby  
Chairman  
and  
The Honorable Patrick J. Leahy  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Shelby and Ranking Member Leahy:

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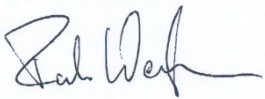
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May 14, 2018

The Honorable Rob Bishop  
Chairman  
and  
The Honorable Raúl Grijalva  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Natural Resources  
U.S House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Bishop and Ranking Member Grijalva:

On behalf of the 1.7 million members of the American Federation of Teachers, including thousands of members of the Asociación de Maestros de Puerto Rico who live in and work as teachers in Puerto Rico, we urge you to ensure that the \$589 million you appropriated for Puerto Rico's students and schools to restart school operations in Puerto Rico, which the US Department of Education has just announced, is spent as Congress intended. This money was intended to help Puerto Rico recover and return to stability after Hurricane Maria, and specifically, to help existing schools restore their operations.

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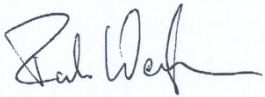
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May 14, 2018

The Honorable Ron Johnson  
Chairman  
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The Honorable Claire McCaskill  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Homeland Security & Government Affairs  
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Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Johnson and Ranking Member McCaskill:

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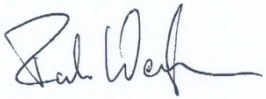
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May 14, 2018

The Honorable Lamar Alexander  
Chairman  
and  
The Honorable Patty Murray  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Health, Education, Labor, & Pensions  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Alexander and Ranking Member Murray:

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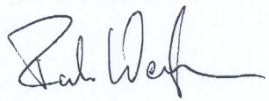
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This is a large infusion of money, and we implore you to ensure that the funds go to rebuild the public schools that Puerto Rico had before the hurricane so it better serves the Puerto Rican children. This can be done through oversight hearings and communication with the U.S. Department of Education and the Puerto Rico Department of Education. It is simply unacceptable for the Puerto Rico Department of Education, now that this federal money has been allocated, to talk about needing to close schools for fiscal reasons. It now has the money needed to keep schools open.

Puerto Rico's public schools offered children stability in the aftermath of the hurricane and continue to serve as centers of their communities. Any use of the \$589 million federal disaster aid for purposes beyond restarting school operations is a betrayal of the island's children.

Sincerely,



Randi Weingarten  
President  
American Federation of Teachers



Aida Díaz de Rodríguez  
President  
Asociación de Maestros de Puerto Rico

RW:AD:emc opeiu#2 afl-cio

cc: Senate Committee on Appropriations; Senate Committee on Homeland Security & Government Affairs; House Committee on Natural Resources; House Committee on Appropriations; House Committee on Education & the Workforce