



**STATE OF VERMONT**  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

February 28, 2023

Hon. Bernard Sanders  
United States Senate  
332 Dirksen Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Hon. Peter Welch  
United States Senate  
G-12 Dirksen Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Hon. Becca Balint  
House of Representatives  
United States Congress  
1408 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Balint and Senators Sanders and Welch:

I am writing on behalf of the Vermont Senate Committee on Education (Committee) regarding funding for school construction in Vermont. As you are aware, in 2007, the Vermont General Assembly suspended the State's school construction aid program in response to receiving demands that significantly exceeded available capital funds. The suspension was put into place to enable the State to begin to repay its obligations. At the time of the suspension, the forecasted amount of total State obligations for school construction was \$153 million.

The State repaid its school construction obligations in 2016, but the State aid for school construction program has not been reinstated. In 2020, there was an estimated \$445,000,000.00 in bonding planned and proposed by school districts for future school construction projects statewide. Due to aging infrastructure of school buildings, the necessity for environmental remediation in school buildings, and the lack of modern technology and facilities, the estimated need has significantly grown since then. The State faces an immense backlog in school construction projects, which has resulted in unsafe and unhealthy learning environments and disparities in the quality of education. As a result, funding for school construction remains an urgent priority for the Committee.

In 2021, the Vermont General Assembly enacted Act 72, which takes several key steps to address the needs and conditions of school facilities in the State. The State's Agency of Education (Agency) is currently undertaking a statewide assessment of the needs of all school buildings,

which will include an estimate of costs. The Agency is also preparing a school construction funding report based on the needs and estimated costs identified in this assessment.

The Vermont General Assembly is taking action to address the urgent school construction needs in the State. The Committee urges you to support measures before Congress that will assist the State in providing funding for school construction so that we can ensure that all Vermont children attend school in a safe, healthy, and modern building.

Thank you for your attention to the Committee's concerns and for all that you do for Vermont. The Committee looks forward to working with you on this and other important issues in the coming months.

Sincerely,

Sen. Brian Campion  
Chair  
Committee on Education  
Vermont Senate

CC: Sen. Bernie Sanders  
Sen. Peter Welch  
Rep. Becca Balint