

Excerpts from Governors' Letters Supporting an Education Jobs Fund

“Although the national economy is beginning to show signs of recovery, state and local budgets are not likely to benefit from any rebound for some time. In fact, I am currently working with the Massachusetts state legislature to close a nearly \$3 billion budget deficit for the 2011 fiscal year. Despite the fact that education is our second largest budget category, we are working hard throughout this downturn to protect it from bearing the brunt of difficult but necessary budget cuts. We have been able to maintain this commitment to public education because of a strong federal/state partnership and because of the assistance provided by the [State Fiscal Stabilization Fund].” – Letter from MA Governor Deval Patrick to Senators Harkin and Reid, 5/19/10

“While the national economic outlook has begun to stabilize, states continue to grapple with severely depressed revenues. Maryland revenues for the current fiscal year (FY) are running nearly 6% below revenues for the prior year....With most economists predicting the national unemployment rate will recede very slowly over the next couple of years, states expect sluggish revenue performance to continue into state FY 2010....Without additional stabilization funding, states will be forced to implement many of the harmful reductions that ARRA sought to forestall including deep cuts to education and public safety....Saving and creating new teaching jobs will protect our hard working families while we strengthen the economy. Equally important, it will ensure that our next generation of leaders receives the best education possible to keep America competitive.” – Letter from MD Governor Martin O’Malley to President Barack Obama, Senators Harry Reid, Tom Harkin, Mitch McConnell, and Mike Enzi, and Representatives Nancy Pelosi and John Boehner, 5/25/10.

“[An education jobs bill] would help prevent thousands of layoffs or a reduction in school days for the 2010-11 academic year at Oregon K-12 schools. This funding will also be critical support for postsecondary education in this time of unprecedented demand and need.” – Letter from OR Governor Theodor Kulongoski to the Oregon congressional delegation, 5/25/10.

“Education is the foundation to rebuilding our economy and effective teachers are key to high academic achievement for students. The State Fiscal Stabilization Funds (SFSF) provide this past year had helped us maintain jobs for teachers and operate our public schools and higher education....Thanks to SFSF funds being

available, we have been able to preserve over 9,700 jobs in our K-12 state and local educational agencies, and several thousand more higher education jobs....However, due to continuing national economic weakness we face a revenue shortfall of some \$703 million for the fast approaching 2010-2011 state fiscal year....”—Letter from NC Governor Bev Purdue to the North Carolina congressional delegation, 4/23/10.

“We recognize that the signs of recovery are beginning to be seen across the country. In Illinois, however, there are still unprecedented challenges to return government programs to a steady state. We are using every tool to address these challenges, but it will be some time before we will see a full recovery. The funding that would be provided through the [education jobs fund] would allow us to preserve the current level of support for education in Illinois. Schools are struggling even under this maintenance level of support since costs continue to rise. Without additional support, however, the cuts will be devastating and the effects will be felt for years to come. Our school districts have estimated a loss of approximately 20,000 jobs across the State in 2010-2011, if we are unable to replace these federal dollars.” – Letter from Illinois Governor Pat Quinn; President of the Senate, John Cullerton; and Speaker of the House, Michael J. Madigan to President Barack Obama, 4/10.

“As you can imagine, we’re struggling to balance the budget and keep critical programs and services going. Just a year ago, we made \$2 billion in cuts, nearly exhausted our reserves and passed two important revenue measures. Our situation would have been even worse, had it not been for funding provided by Congress as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. Now, Oregon needs your help again. The Governor, Speaker and I are working with agency directors to best manage the impact of these additional cuts. I believe that we can find a path forward for some services, such as Higher Education, which has considerable tuition reserves. K-12 schools and human services have us scared. These are the areas where we could use some immediate federal dollars. We don’t want to close schools early or lay off teachers.” – Letter from Peter Courtney, President of the Oregon Senate to the Oregon congressional delegation, 6/7/10.