



1201 16th Street, NW | Washington, DC 20036 | Phone: (202) 833-4000

Rebecca S. Pringle  
*President*

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*Vice President*

Noel Candelaria  
*Secretary-Treasurer*

Kim A. Anderson  
*Executive Director*

February 10, 2021

Committee on Energy and Commerce  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative:

On behalf of our 3 million members and the 50 million students they serve, for tomorrow's markup we urge you to support the Concurrent Resolution on the Budget for Fiscal Year 2021, S. Con. Res. 5. Votes on this issue may be included in NEA's Report Card for the 117th Congress.

Specifically, we urge you to support the \$7.6 billion Emergency Connectivity Fund included in S. Con. Res. 5 to address an aspect of the digital divide known as the homework gap—the inability to do schoolwork at home due to lack of internet access—via the E-Rate program administered by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). This one-time emergency funding would be used to help schools procure and distribute Wi-Fi hotspots, connected devices, and other technology to K-12 students so they can participate in remote learning, after-school enrichment activities, and programs to address the loss of learning opportunities during the pandemic.

Nationwide, the homework gap afflicts 16 million students—roughly 1 in 3. A disproportionate share of those students are Black, Brown or Indigenous, come from low-income households, or live in rural areas. Every day that passes, the lack of internet access causes them to lose still more learning opportunities. Previously enacted legislation allowed COVID-19 emergency funding to be used to help close the homework gap, but did not provide the dedicated funding necessary to ensure fairness and equity as the trusted and long-established E-Rate program would do.

Please support the \$7.6 billion Emergency Connectivity Fund for the FCC's E-Rate program included in S. Con. Res. 5.

Sincerely,

Marc Egan  
Director of Government Relations  
National Education Association