



## **A BETTER DEAL FOR TEACHERS & STUDENTS**

Education is the catalyst for economic mobility; it puts the rungs on the ladders of opportunity. We need great teachers in every classroom so that our children have every opportunity to succeed. And we must respect the voices of these professionals when making decisions about what's best for their students. In our view, teachers' pay should much more closely reflect their value to our society. After all, teachers are preparing our next generation. Investing in our future is not only the right thing to do, it's the smart thing to do.

Unfortunately, Republicans have been pushing federal and state education cuts to fund tax giveaways for the rich, resulting in fewer resources for schools and students and low teacher pay. That must end. To better support teachers and school staff to match the critical work they are doing for our children, Democrats have put together a plan to offer our nation's teachers and students A Better Deal.

### *A Better Deal for Teachers and Students would:*

- 1. Dedicate \$50 billion to states and school districts to increase teacher compensation and recruit and retain a strong, diverse workforce over the next 10 years.**
- 2. Establish a new \$50 billion fund for school infrastructure and resources.**
- 3. Provide additional support to initiatives that increase capacity in Title I schools and ensure all students have access to academic opportunities like computer science, music, and civics.**
- 4. Protect teachers' freedom to negotiate for better pay and conditions by safeguarding the right of public employees to join unions, collectively bargain, and engage in collective action to support each other.**
- 5. Meet our federal commitment to fund special education.**

### *Addressing the challenges facing America's teachers and schools:*

For the better part of the 20th Century, being a teacher in America meant being a part of the middle class. You worked hard and you received decent pay and benefits, enough to afford a home, a car, a vacation, and raise a family. But for the past twenty years, public sector employees' pay, especially that of teachers, has been falling behind. [A 2016 report](#) from the Economic Policy Institute found that teachers take home weekly wages that are 17 percent lower

than comparable workers. Nationwide, 18 percent of teachers [reported](#) working jobs outside of school to supplement their full-time teacher salary. That's why thousands of teachers across the country have organized and staged walkouts to demand fair pay, adequate resources, and better working conditions, and that is why *A Better Deal for Teachers & Students* would **dedicate \$50 billion to states and school districts to increase teacher compensation and recruit and retain a strong, diverse workforce over the next 10 years.**

In addition, during the recession, public investment in K-12 schools declined dramatically. We tell children that education is important, but send them a different message by putting them in substandard schools. Improving our nation's school infrastructure will help retain our best educators. Our plan would **establish a new \$50 billion fund for school infrastructure and resources.** Students and educators deserve 21<sup>st</sup> Century classrooms and up-to-date educational technology and materials.

We also need to provide all students with a well-rounded education to get them ready for today's changing economy. Our plan would **give additional support to initiatives that increase capacity in Title I schools and ensure all students have access to academic opportunities like computer science, music, and civics.**

Currently, no federal law provides teachers and other public servants with collective bargaining rights. Democrats want to guarantee teachers the same freedoms that private sector workers have to negotiate collectively for a better deal. *A Better Deal for Teachers & Students* would **protect teachers' freedom to negotiate for better pay and conditions by safeguarding the right of public employees to join unions, collectively bargain, and engage in collective action to support each other.**

Finally, when Congress first passed the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in 1975, the federal government promised to provide 40 percent of the excess costs of educating children with disabilities. We are not even close to that, which is why *A Better Deal for Teachers & Students* would **finally meet our federal commitment to fund special education.** Fulfilling our federal promise will not only help provide resources to students with disabilities, it will improve the quality of education for all students.

### *How will we pay for this investment?*

Paying for this is simple: revisit the Trump tax cuts for the top 1 percent. Instead of allowing millionaires, billionaires, and massive corporations to keep their tax breaks and special-interest loopholes, Democrats would invest in teachers and students.

### *Bottom line:*

If we want the American Dream to live on, as brightly and as widely accessible in our time as it was in the past, we need to start seriously investing in education. Democrats have a plan to do it by offering A Better Deal for teachers. And we're going to fight for it.