

April 29, 2008

The Honorable George Miller
Chairman
Committee on Education and Labor
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515



*Excellence and Equity
in Public Education
through School Board
Leadership*

Re: H.R. 3021, Representative Chandler's 21st Century High-Performing Public School Facilities Act and the Loebsock-Kildee Committee Substitute

Dear Chairman Miller:

On behalf of more than 95,000 local school board members who represent more than 49 million students in the 15,000 public school districts across the nation, the National School Boards Association (NSBA) supports your efforts to provide \$6.4 billion in grants to states and local school districts for immediate school repairs and modernization in H.R. 3021, "Representative Chandler's 21st Century High-Performing Public School Facilities Act" and the Loebsock-Kildee Committee Substitute.

The infrastructure for significant numbers of public schools across the nation is inadequate, outdated, or even crumbling, thus adversely affecting school and student performance. Recent estimates place total school facility needs, including technology, at well over \$300 billion.

Immediate federal funding for repairs and modernization, with an emphasis on energy-efficiency, will offer much-needed and timely help for schools in high-poverty communities—both urban and rural—with limited tax bases. Moreover, federal assistance is sorely needed in order to address this crisis that could be exacerbated by reduced state and local revenues currently projected in more than 20 states. Because of the widespread housing market crisis, local property tax revenues are expected to decline in many communities, thereby, affecting a major source of funding for our schools and for capital improvements, including school repairs and renovation.

The "21st Century High-Performing Public School Facilities Act" (H.R. 3021) and the Loebsock-Kildee substitute would help ensure that the educational infrastructure for our school systems is conducive for a 21st century learning environment. While we support the legislation, NSBA does question whether the purposes of it are best served with the blanket application of the Davis Bacon Act to all projects and all communities. Nonetheless, the legislation would provide a critical federal investment to help advance student achievement; renovate, repair and modernize thousands of public schools; and, create jobs and contracting opportunities to help stimulate a stagnant economy.

NSBA greatly appreciates your leadership to increase the federal investment in education and urges your continued support for this priority.

Sincerely,

Michael A. Resnick
Associate Executive Director

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Cc: Members, House Committee on Education and Labor

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