



April 29, 2008

The Honorable George Miller
Chairman
House Education and Labor Committee
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Miller:

On behalf of National PTA, comprising of millions of parents, teachers, students, and other child advocates, I urge you to pass Rep. Chandler's 21st Century High-Performing Public School Facilities Act (H.R. 3021) and the Loeb sack-Kildee Education and Labor Committee substitute. This legislation will authorize \$6.4 billion in grants to states and local school districts for the renovation, repair and building of schools, placing an emphasis on energy efficiency and environmentally safe construction projects. Given the overwhelming need in America's schools and the link between the quality of school facilities and the level of student performance, PTA encourages you to support this important legislation.

The average public school building is nearly 50 years old, was not designed to meet the demands of current and future technology, and, in some cases, fails to meet basic health and safety codes. Schools today face enormous challenges, including record-high enrollments, new demands for educational technology (including technology to assist in the education of children with special needs), the need for school-based before- and after-school programs, as well as health and safety hazards caused by deteriorating facilities. The 21st Century High-Performing Public School Facilities Act, as amended by the Loeb sack-Kildee Education and Labor Committee substitute, will help address these issues, providing local communities with additional resources that are much needed.

In addition to addressing the staggering needs facing America's public education facilities, this legislation will stimulate the creation of over 100,000 new jobs in construction and related services at a time when this fundamentally important job sector is struggling. There are school districts in every state with renovation, repair and building projects that can be underway expeditiously if the funds authorized in this legislation were available to underwrite the project costs. The 21st Century High-Performing Public School Facilities Act, as amended by the Loeb sack-Kildee Education and Labor Committee substitute, will help states and communities supplement their limited resources, while allowing the flexibility needed for local decision makers.

The problems facing our public education facilities demand a strong and sustained partnership of federal, state and local entities. States and schools are ill-equipped to address these issues alone.

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Modern, safe and healthy education facilities will result in a better educated, more informed, more productive population. If we are to create the schools our nation needs to compete in the 21st century, it is essential that we draw upon the investment of our local communities, the state governments, and the federal government. Passage of the 21st Century High-Performing Public School Facilities Act and the Loeb sack-Kildee Education and Labor Committee substitute would be a tremendous step forward in this undertaking. I thank you for your time and urge passage of this critical legislation.

If National PTA can provide you with any further information or assistance, please contact Jim Vanderhook, Public Policy Specialist, at 202-289-6790.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jan Harp Domene". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jan Harp Domene
PTA National President