

## **Republican Motion to Instruct #12**

### **PUT AMERICA'S CHILDREN AHEAD OF POLITICIANS**

#### **Offered by Representative Donalds (FL) and Representative Hinson (IA)**

Mr. Donalds and Mrs. Hinson move that the Committee on the Budget direct its Chairman to request on behalf of the Committee that the rule providing for consideration of the bill make in order an amendment to prohibit any funding provided in this legislation for state and local governments who have failed to reopen K-12 public schools for optional, full-time, in-person learning within 30 days of enactment.

#### **Background**

- (1) School closures during the pandemic have led to reduced in-person instruction and enrollment nationwide. For example, Massachusetts public schools have lost over 37,000 students, Fairfax County public schools in Virginia have lost more than 8,700 students, and New York public schools have lost 31,000 students.
- (2) Studies show that prolonged school closures have severe adverse effects on American children, parents, and families:
  - a. School closures negatively impact students' mental health. A study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) showed an increase in the percentage of emergency room visits among youths related to mental health. The public school district in Clark County, Nevada, experienced 18 student suicides since last March, doubling the previous year's total.
  - b. Reports show that school closures disproportionately impact students that live in the poorest 20 percent of neighborhoods in the United States, citing that these students will experience more negative and long-lasting effects when compared to other students.
  - c. Schools that refuse to reopen place an additional burden on families and children, especially for those that rely on schools for childcare, meals, and other social services.
- (3) CDC guidance confirms the need for schools to reopen, stating, "It is critical for schools to open as safely and as soon as possible, and remain open, to achieve the benefits of in-person learning and key support services."
- (4) Children can safely return to the classroom as studies have shown there is a weak correlation between schools reopening for in-person instruction and increases in COVID-19 cases.
- (5) Indeed, many schools throughout the country have successfully and safely reopened. Surveys show that roughly 60 percent of students receiving private school education are back in the classroom, compared to just 24 percent of public school students.

- (6) It is imperative that students return to school for in-person instruction, and state and local funding in the legislation should be withheld if state and local governments fail to reopen K-12 public schools for optional, full-time, in-person learning.

### **Technical Language**

The amendment should include language that conditions funding for state and local governments on reopening K-12 public schools for optional, full-time, in-person learning within 30 days of enactment, such as the following:

No state or local government shall receive funding under section 5001 (Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds) if it has failed to reopen K-12 public schools for optional, full-time, in-person learning within 30 days of enactment of this Act.