The Rebuild America’s Schools Act

In 2014, a Department of Education study estimated that it would cost $197 billion to bring all public schools into good condition. The 2016 State of Our Schools Report determined there is an annual state and local spending gap of $46 billion on school facilities. A 2006 Building Education Success Together report found that high-poverty and minority-serving schools are unable to adequately invest in school facilities. Schools predominantly serving white students spend nearly 50% more on capital construction than those serving minority students, and wealthy districts spend nearly triple their high-poverty counterparts.

School facilities still pose significant health and safety threats to more than 50 million students and 3 million teachers in public schools. A 1996 GAO Report—the most recent GAO study on this issue—determined that poor school facility conditions were concentrated in high-poverty schools serving minority students. The GAO found then that over 15,000 schools were circulating air unfit to breathe. According to a 2014 CDC survey, only 46.5% of schools have a program in place today to address indoor air quality issues.

Too many schools lack access sufficient high-speed digital infrastructure needed to support 21st Century learning. A 2017 Education Super Highway report found that over 19,000 schools serving more than 11.6 million students “are without the minimum connectivity necessary for digital learning.”

The Rebuild America’s Schools Act would invest $100 billion to create over 1.9 million jobs by addressing critical physical and digital infrastructure needs in schools. Upon enactment, this bill would:

- Create a $70 billion grant program and $30 billion tax credit bond program targeted at high-poverty schools with facilities that pose health and safety risks to students and staff;

- Leverage federal, state, and local resources for an overall investment of $107 billion, creating over 1.9 million jobs based on an Economic Policy Institute analysis that each $1 billion spent on construction creates 17,785 job;

- Develop a comprehensive national database on the condition of public school facilities; such a national database currently does not exist and would provide much-needed insight into the condition of our public schools; and

- Expand access to high-speed broadband to ensure that public schools have the reliable and high-speed Internet access they need for digital learning.