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News. . .

Investing in education makes economic sense

DOVER, DE, February 10, 2009 Diane Donohue, president of the 11,500-member Delaware State Education Association, sent a letter yesterday to Delaware’s Congressional delegation about how they can help Delaware, Delaware’s families and Delaware’s students by supporting President Obama’s vision for economic stimulus and recovery. “Reducing funds for education makes no economic sense,” she emphasized. In Delaware, the difference between the House version and Senate version, for state stabilization and education alone, is \$151.6 million.

The House version of the bill would provide \$177.6 billion new dollars to public schools.

The Senate version, which passed today, provides \$97.7 billion.

Here is how it breaks down for Delaware, comparing the state stabilization and education portions over the two bills, over a two year period:

The State Stabilization Fund

House: \$176.9 million
Senate: \$87 million
Difference: - \$89.9 million

School Modernization

House: \$38.7 million
Senate: 0
Difference: - \$38.7 million

Federal Pell Grants

House: \$26.5 million (to boost the maximum award by \$500, to \$5,250)
Senate: \$21.5 million (to boost the maximum award by \$400, to \$5,250)
Difference: - \$5 million

IDEA Part B grants to states (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act)

House: \$38.6 million
Senate: \$38.5 million
Difference: - \$100,000

Higher Education Modernization

House: \$17.9 million
Senate: 0
Difference: - \$17.9 million

ESEA Title I, Part A (Elementary and Secondary Education Act)

House: \$34.2 million
Senate: \$34.2 million

Difference: ---

Total difference to Delaware between the two bills :

- \$151.6 million

“Last night, the President made it clear that he understands that investing in education makes economic sense. (See end of release.) The injection of funds will provide aid to struggling children and families, states, communities and public schools to cope with the worst economic and financial crisis since the Great Depression,” she emphasized. “It will also preserve jobs for badly needed school modernization and construction.”

She and other DSEA leaders and members up and down the state have been contacting Rep. Castle (who voted against the House bill) and Senator Carper (who helped craft the Senate compromise which cut education funding) about making sure that education and state stabilization funds are maximized. Their primary message: **Please maximize the funds for education, because investing in education, contrary to what some believe, is, in fact, the best investment America can make now for long-term economic growth.**

Teachers don't need data to understand this concept, but there are interesting facts available to support this claim:

- Over a 50-year period, common stocks returned an average of 6.3 percent a year. A World Bank study found a dollar investment in education returns 14.3% annually in tax revenue and reduced government spending on social services.
- Preventing one student from dropping out of school will save federal and state governments more than \$209,000 over that person's lifetime.

“For Delaware,” Donohue adds, “our hope is that when the Senate and House get together to fashion a Conference Bill for reconsideration by the entire Congress, that a majority of our nation's elected officials will recognize the enormous benefit that aid to the states and to education will have on Delaware's families, their quality of life, their future.”

As Donohue explained in her letter,

“As the months have gone by, Delaware's educators have experienced the deepening economic crisis in a most intimate way. We have educated and nurtured children from homes facing foreclosure, from homes where a parent has lost his/her job, where the family goes to the food bank, and where the last sounds of the night are arguments over money. To this point, we have managed to provide a safe haven for these children. Will that be the case next year?”

“We are urging Senators Carper, Kaufman and Congressman Castle to think about the effects of 27,000 Delawareans who are unemployed; the effects on their children when the family is in crisis; and that our schools are not only a safe haven during this very difficult time, but also their source of hope for the future.”

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Excerpts from President Obama's news conference, Feb. 9, 2009 about investing in education:

There will be jobs creating the 21st-century classrooms, libraries and labs for millions of children across America. And they will be the jobs of firefighters and teachers and police officers that would otherwise be eliminated, if we do not provide states with some relief.

...Education, yet another example. The suggestion is, why should the federal government be involved in school construction? Well, I visited a school down in South Carolina that was built in the 1850s. Kids are still learning in that school – as best they can. When the – when the railroad – when the – it's right next to a railroad, and when the train runs by, the whole building shakes and the teacher has to stop teaching for a while. The – the auditorium is completely broken down and they can't use it. So why wouldn't we want to build state-of-the-art schools with science labs that are teaching our kids the skills they need for the 21st century, that will enhance our economy and, by the way, right now will create jobs?

Attach: Letter from DSEA to Congressional delegation, Feb. 9, 2009



With 11,500 members, the Delaware State Education Association (DSEA) is a public employee union representing the public school teachers in all 19 school districts, as well as many support employee groups in 18 school districts. DSEA also represents the teachers employed by the Division of Children, Youth and their Families as well as the state's public health nurses.

DSEA is a private, non-profit membership organization dedicated to promoting and defending outstanding public education for all students; and advancing and protecting the interests of its members.

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DSEA: Moving education forward