

DEMOCRATS

for EDUCATION REFORM

Talking Points on American Recovery and Reinvestment Plan February 3, 2009

- This economic stimulus package is a **historic investment** in education, the largest increase in federal funds in history
- This historic investment also presents a once-in-a-lifetime **opportunity** to get things right
- There is more than enough in the \$145 billion in education funds to:
 - **shore up** state and local education budgets;
 - **stimulate** the economy; *and*, equally important
 - **advance genuine reform.**
- DFER is encouraged that the House bill specifically includes funds for:
 - **Teacher Incentive Program** (\$200 million) – to boost teacher pay, change pay schedules, and improve the quality of teaching in high-poverty, high-minority schools
 - **Improving State Data Systems** (\$250 million)
 - **Charter Schools Facilities** (\$30 million)

The amounts for each of these functions are relatively (and in some cases, ridiculously) small. They approach rounding error in the context of the \$145 *billion* education package.

We urge the Senate to fund each of these three functions at a level **above** that which can be found in the House bill.

- DFER is encouraged that the House and Senate versions of the package both include state incentive and innovation funds to be awarded by the Secretary.

■ DFER strongly prefers the more specific language in the House bill on the use of state funds to:

- **revamp state assessments;** and,
- **getting qualified, experienced teachers** to high-poverty, high-minority schools.

These are areas that both the Secretary and the Democratic Congress have pledged to fix after years of neglect by the Bush Administration.

We urge the Senate to adopt the House language on incentives and innovation.

■ The House bill has sensible provisions on fiscal oversight (“maintenance of effort” and “supplement not supplant,”) to ensure that states spend the money appropriately. The Senate bill is significantly weaker on these points.

We urge the Senate to adopt the House provisions on fiscal oversight.

--

Democrats for Education Reform (DFER) is a national political action committee based in New York City whose mission is to encourage a more productive dialogue within the Democratic Party on the need to fundamentally reform American public education. DFER operates on all levels of government to educate elected officials and support reform-minded candidates for public office.

For more information, please visit www.dfer.org.