

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0305

February 18, 2021

President Joseph R. Biden
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Mr. President,

Learning is a foundational process that nourishes the mind and well-being of our children. When the government cuts out this foundation, our children's development becomes compromised. It is more harmful to keep children locked out of schools than for children to go back to schools. We are extremely concerned with the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) updated guidelines to operate schools during COVID-19. The updated guidelines – as admitted by CDC Director Walensky – are the outcome of political interference by public service union bosses into a process that should have been guided strictly by public health officials. We urge your administration to **follow the science** and encourage CDC to re-evaluate their guidance and work with states to ensure in-person attendance resumes immediately.

On February 3, 2021, CDC Director Rochelle Walensky stated, "I want to be clear that there is increasing data to suggest that schools can safely reopen and that that safe reopening does not suggest that teachers need to be vaccinated in order to reopen safely... Vaccination of teachers is not a prerequisite of safe reopening of schools." However, on February 12, 2021, CDC Director Rochelle Walensky stated, "The decision, on when and how to begin in-person learning is one that must be based on a thorough review of what the science tells us works and an understanding of the lived experiences, challenges, and perspectives, of teachers and school staff, parents and students."

Mr. President, "lived experiences" is not science. The CDC's color-coded zones recommending, 1) full-in person, 2) hybrid, 3) reduced attendance, and 4) virtual only attendance, are nothing more than a lifeline to teachers' unions that have placed their political interests before student interests. Earlier this year, Duke University and the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill conducted a peer-reviewed study which highlighted that the transmission of COVID-19 in schools is "extremely rare" and concluded that "schools can stay open safely in communities with widespread transmission."

The democrat-led Congress is set to pass another COVID-19 relief package which will include \$128 billion for schools to operate in a safe environment. This is not the first – or presumably the last – federal relief package that schools will receive.

Now that CDC is recommending that teachers get priority for vaccination, and given the amount of information we have at our disposal about the risks of COVID-19 transmission, it defies reason and science to not have our schools fully open today.

Mr. President, "**follow the science**" has become your rally cry to get our country out of the COVID-19 nightmare that is deteriorating the morale of America's youth. Our children and families cannot continue to suffer any longer. We urge you to live up to your word: **follow the science** and work with our state and local governments to reopen our schools immediately.

Sincerely,



Andy Biggs
Member of Congress