

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

February 24, 2021

Governor Doug Ducey  
Office of the Arizona Governor  
1700 W Washington Street  
Phoenix, Arizona 85007

Governor Ducey,

A little over one year ago, the first COVID-19 case was confirmed in the United States. Since then, we have learned lockdowns are not effective in fighting the pandemic and seen tangible evidence that the absence of in-person learning is devastating to the well-being of our children. We need you to listen to the science and confront the harm school closures have had by putting our students back in the classroom. Please reopen our schools before we cause irreparable damage.

The science is clear, with swaths of data showing the extent of damage school closures have had on our children, we must be bold. One finding, which best illustrates the extent of this damage, is the stark rise in emergency room visits for mental health conditions, suicide attempts, substance abuse, domestic violence, and child abuse and neglect.<sup>1</sup> As fathers, we both know how precious our children are and how heartbreaking this reality is. According to the new guidelines issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), "Evidence suggests that many K-12 schools that have strictly implemented mitigation strategies have been able to safely open for in-person instruction and remain open." Additionally, "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."

One question many have raised is the necessity of vaccination for teachers prior to returning to the classroom. During a White House briefing, CDC Director Dr. Rochelle Walensky addressed this concern saying, "There is increasing data to suggest that schools can safely reopen, and that safe reopening does not suggest that teachers need to be vaccinated." The only holdup in Washington is resistance from teachers' unions, which are demanding lump sums of money with little accountability and with no concern for students. While I have tremendous respect for schoolteachers who provide an invaluable service to our communities, they are not the priority. Our children come first. Just like our constituents come first before our own interests.

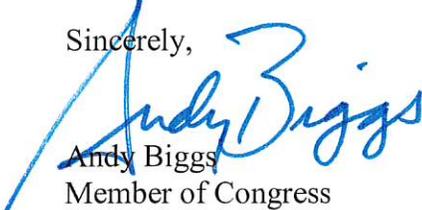
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<sup>1</sup> Kristin M. Holland, PhD, MPH1; Christopher Jones, PharmD, DrPH, MPH1; Alana M. Vivolo-Kantor, PhD, MPH1; et al

Since March, Congress has delivered billions of dollars for K-12 schools and higher education institutions. Now, Congress is preparing to send more than \$128 billion for K-12 schools and more than \$39 billion for higher education institutions, presumably with even more to come later.

We have three options: continue to let our children suffer, wait for President Biden to sidestep his donors, or lead by following the science and reopening our schools. Please help usher our nation back to normalcy by putting our children first. I supported you pushing back against calls to lock down Arizona when California and New York were doing so. I hope you will make the correct decision once again.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Andy Biggs". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "A".

Andy Biggs  
Member of Congress