

# **Keep our Educators Working Act**

## **April 14, 2010**

Harkin Introduces Bill to Keep Educators on the Job

The Keep Our Educators Working Act Will Create an Education Jobs Fund

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA), Chairman of the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee and of the Senate Appropriations panel that funds education initiatives, introduced the Keep Our Educators Working Act today. The bill will create a \$23 billion Education Jobs Fund to help keep teachers, principals, librarians and other school personnel on the job as states face crippling budget shortfalls. Cosponsors of the measure so far include: Senators Begich (D-AK), Bingaman (D-NM), Sherrod Brown (D-OH), Burriss (D-IL), Dodd (D-CT), Durbin (D-IL), Gillibrand (D-NY), Lautenberg (D-NJ), Merkley (D-OR), Mikulski (D-MD), Murray (D-WA), Schumer (D-NY) and Stabenow (D-MI).

“This country is about to face a massive wave of layoffs in our schools and institutions of higher learning that could weaken our economic recovery and cause serious damage to our education system,” Senator Harkin said. “This bill is an investment in our kids, in our economy and in our future.” The Keep Our Educators Working Act will create an Education Jobs Fund modeled after the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund (SFSF) that was established in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (the ‘Recovery Act’).

The SFSF is currently supporting more than 300,000 education jobs, such as teachers, principals, librarians, and counselors, and is widely credited with mitigating the impact of the recent recession. However, even with the SFSF, schools across the country have laid off workers, and the job outlook is worse for the 2010-2011 school year. Additional resources are needed to help states and districts avoid a “funding cliff” that would result in even more layoffs.

“Recent headlines make the case that two pillars of the American dream – a good job and a good education – are at risk for millions upon millions of our citizens,” Harkin said. “At this point in our fragile recovery, we need to put Americans back to work educating the next generation, and that’s what this bill does.”

The \$23 billion included in the Keep Our Educators Working Act is roughly half of the amount dedicated to state aid in the SFSF, and is equal to the amount passed by the House in its December 2009 jobs legislation. Funding could be used for:

- Compensation and benefits and other expenses necessary to retain existing employees, and for the hiring of new employees, in order to provide early childhood, elementary, secondary, or postsecondary educational and related services; or
- On-the-job training activities for education-related careers. Below are links to several recent articles detailing the severity of the budget shortfall states are experiencing and the toll they are taking on our teachers and students.

A Ruinous Meltdown<[http://harkin-press.eneews.senate.gov/mail/util.cfm?mailaction=clickthru&gpiv=2100056699.4876.220&gen=1&mailing\\_linkid=12691](http://harkin-press.eneews.senate.gov/mail/util.cfm?mailaction=clickthru&gpiv=2100056699.4876.220&gen=1&mailing_linkid=12691)>

New York Times - Bob Herbert - Mar 20, 2010

For all the happy talk about “no child left behind,” the truth is that in Arizona and New Jersey and dozens of other states trying to cope with the fiscal disaster brought on by the Great Recession, millions of children are being left far behind, and many millions of adults as well.

States, Cities Likely to Slash Jobs As Stimulus Dwindles

<[http://harkin-press.eneews.senate.gov/mail/util.cfm?mailaction=clickthru&gpiv=2100056699.4876.220&gen=1&mailing\\_linkid=12692](http://harkin-press.eneews.senate.gov/mail/util.cfm?mailaction=clickthru&gpiv=2100056699.4876.220&gen=1&mailing_linkid=12692)>

CNBC - Albert Bozzo - Mar 10, 2010

The worst looks to be over for private-sector unemployment, but it may be just beginning for state and local government workers.

Dubuque School Board Approves Job Cuts, High School Closure

<[http://harkin-press.eneews.senate.gov/mail/util.cfm?mailaction=clickthru&gpiv=2100056699.4876.220&gen=1&mailing\\_linkid=12693](http://harkin-press.eneews.senate.gov/mail/util.cfm?mailaction=clickthru&gpiv=2100056699.4876.220&gen=1&mailing_linkid=12693)>

KCRG - Katie Widemann - Mar 22, 2010

On Monday night, the Dubuque school district approved major cuts, including closing the Central Alternative High School and up to 165 positions. The board also approved job cuts district wide. Administrators will cut at least 165 positions. 88 and one half positions will come from certified staff, ...

To access the full text of the bill, click

here<[http://harkin-press.eneews.senate.gov/mail/util.cfm?mailaction=clickthru&gpiv=2100056699.4876.220&gen=1&mailing\\_linkid=12694](http://harkin-press.eneews.senate.gov/mail/util.cfm?mailaction=clickthru&gpiv=2100056699.4876.220&gen=1&mailing_linkid=12694)>..