

Bost and Finkenauer Introduce Legislation to Address Rural Teacher Shortages

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Reps. Mike Bost (R-IL) and Abby Finkenauer (D-IA) today introduced bipartisan legislation to combat inadequate funding and teacher shortages in rural schools. The Rural Education Investment Act requires the Secretary of Education to determine the percentage of K-12 students living in rural areas and ensures it is equal to the percentage of Teacher Quality Partnership (TQP) grant dollars going to schools in rural areas. The TQP Grant Program allows teachers to be placed in a full-time classroom clinical practice while completing Master’s-level coursework.

“All students deserve access to a quality education, regardless of where they live,” said Congressman Bost. “A major part of that comes by educating and training highly

qualified teachers. While Southern Illinois is blessed with many amazing educational professionals, rural communities face unique challenges in recruiting and retaining qualified teachers. I'm proud to lead this bipartisan effort to ensure that rural areas receive assistance and resources necessary to grow the next generation of America's leaders."

*"All Iowa students deserve access to a high-quality education wherever their home may be," **Congresswoman Finkenauer said**, "From Grinnell, to Northwood, to Waukon, the Rural Education Investment Act will help ensure Iowa schools have a pipeline of great teachers. After attacks on our public school teachers in the Iowa state legislature, we must do everything we can in Congress to recruit and retain teachers in our state. I am proud to join Congressman Bost in pushing for this bipartisan bill to become law. We must continue to look at finding solutions to build up and support our teachers and our kids."*

*"Through establishing model residency programs, the Teacher Quality Partnership (TQP) program is essential in preparing educators of the 21st century," **said Marc Egan, Director of Government Relations, National Education Association**. "NEA is proud to support the Rural Education Investment Act to ensure rural communities benefit from TQP and receive a pool of talented, licensed, and effective educators, just as their suburban and urban counterparts."*

The Rural Education Investment Act is supported by the National Education Association, the School Superintendents Association, the National Rural Education Association, the National Rural Education Advocacy Coalition, the Association of Illinois Rural and Small Schools, and the Iowa State Education Association.