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May 15, 2017

The Honorable Robert C. "Bobby" Scott
Ranking Member
Committee on Education and the Workforce
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

RE: *Rebuilding America's Schools Act of 2017*

Dear Ranking Member Scott:

On behalf of our state school boards associations and the more than 90,000 local school board members who govern our nation's 14,000 public school districts across the nation, the National School Boards Association (NSBA) appreciates your leadership to address the infrastructure needs of our nation's public schools. The *Rebuilding America's Schools Act* would provide the investments needed by many of our school districts for 21st Century educational facilities that support the range of priorities for our students and communities. From classrooms with modern broadband connections to state-of-the-art science laboratories and energy efficient green building design, the legislation would help address these educational needs and support long-term goals for sustainability.

Schools across our country face challenges associated with depleted infrastructure; existing buildings are inadequate and outdated. Recent estimates place total school facility needs, including technology, at well over \$500 billion, which is beyond the capacity of many communities and States to address. The *Rebuilding America's Schools Act* would prioritize grants for schools in underserved communities, create a new school infrastructure bond program, expand the existing Qualified Zone Academy Bonds program, promote green building design, and support digital infrastructure. These provisions would be beneficial and would assist local school districts in addressing infrastructure-related needs.

However, the *Rebuilding America's Schools Act* would also expand existing federal law governing labor standards requirements and make them applicable to school bond programs. NSBA opposes the inclusion of such provisions and urges the Committee to uphold the right of school boards to pursue the most efficient and cost-effective means of delivering education and related services, including contracts with outside providers.

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Furthermore, NSBA strongly supports the right of local school boards to retain all necessary decision-making authority when contracting with private companies in the operation of public schools. Therefore, we oppose these provisions and urge an exemption of these provisions.

NSBA appreciates your leadership to increase federal resources for the capital improvements our public schools need in order to provide the educational services critical to the success of our students. The *Rebuilding America's Schools Act* would address many priorities for safe and healthy learning environments that facilitate interactive classroom instruction, build capacity for experiential learning and skills development, engage our students and communities as cornerstones for civic participation, and promote efficiencies within school district operating budgets.

We look forward to working with you and your staff to address NSBA's concerns with the bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Thomas J. Gentzel". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'T' and 'G'.

Thomas J. Gentzel
Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer