

SPOTLIGHT ON ECONOMIC RECOVERY

Public schools are drivers of our communities. Due to the economic crisis brought forth by this pandemic, the country has lost nearly 1 million education jobs, and another 2 million more are at risk. As educators, we want to open schools, but we cannot bring students back to the classroom if schools do not have the support to do it safely and make sure they have what they need to succeed. Evidence shows that [the coronavirus pandemic has exposed and exacerbated the inequities facing our most vulnerable students](#)—particularly for Black and Brown students and students living in poverty.

Families of color and low-income families have been hit hardest, both in terms of infection rate and economic ramifications, such as job loss and pay cuts. Children in these families are likely to experience less support around distance learning and a higher rate of resulting trauma. It is unconscionable to jeopardize the lives of millions of Americans by threatening to withhold money from communities and schools in order to protect corporations and play politics. [The country desperately needs national leadership to provide federal financial assistance to states](#) that are gearing up to slash billions from schools that will deeply hurt students, educators, and their families—and will only worsen the fallout of this economic crisis caused by the coronavirus pandemic.

Here's what Democratic candidate Joe Biden has to say . . .

[“We have a health crisis, an economic crisis, a racial justice crisis, a climate crisis. We need to come together to solve these crises, to solve them as Americans.”](#) In his latest economic plan, [“Build Back Better,”](#) he affirms that economic recovery must start “with a real strategy to deal with the pandemic.”

If elected president, he has pledged to immediately “provide state, local, and tribal governments with the aid they need so that educators, firefighters and other essential workers aren’t being laid off; extend COVID crisis unemployment insurance to help those who are out of work; [and] provide a comeback package for Main Street businesses and entrepreneurs.” He believes that “we can’t solve the jobs crisis until we [solve the public health crisis,](#)” which includes “widespread testing-and-tracing . . . a sustainable supply chain for PPE and supplies . . . development of treatments and vaccines . . . [and] a stronger, more effective reopening.”

Biden admits, “America has been knocked down,” and the country needs to face and remedy “unacceptable truths” that “Black and Latino Americans, Native Americans, immigrants, and women have never been welcomed as full participants in the economy.”

[Biden challenges President Trump:](#) “It’s not just about you We need real plans, real guidelines, with uniform, nationwide standards, to help us chart our economic reopening Fix the shortage of PPE . . . before you tee off another round of golf.”

Here's what Republican candidate President Donald Trump has to say . . .

[The economic and health crisis stemming from the coronavirus “is being handled.”](#) He has lamented that [“before the plague . . . came in and hit us . . . we built the greatest economy in history, not only for our country, but for the world.”](#)

Often ignoring his own administration’s plan for reopening, the president described his recovery strategy as “sheltering the most vulnerable, including older Americans and nursing home residents, while allowing those at lower risk, such as the young and healthy—children, in many cases; the immune system is so powerful, so strong—but the young and the healthy to safely return to work and to school.” Concerning schools, he believes that “we have to open our schools. Open our schools. Stop this nonsense.” [Trump has threatened to cut federal funds from schools](#) that do not open in-person this fall, and he accuses Democrats of playing politics with school reopening because “it would be bad for them politically if U.S. schools open before the November Election.”

Almost a dozen states are grappling with a new round of shutdowns and deaths related to the pandemic surge of more than 135,000 souls, and [more than 30 million people face uncertainty about expiring unemployment benefits.](#) Yet Trump tweets that [“the economy is coming back fast!”](#)