



TSTA NEWS

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TSTA applauds House anti-voucher vote and amendment requiring Legislature to spend federal stimulus funds to increase school budgets, not replace state funding

Texas State Teachers Association President Ovidia Molina released the following statement on the House budget:

The Texas State Teachers Association applauds the Texas House for once again rejecting private school vouchers and for adopting two key amendments to its budget to govern the state's allocation of almost \$18 billion in federal stimulus funds for public education.

We are pleased that Rep. Eddie Rodriguez's amendment was adopted to require the federal funds to be appropriated to supplement state education spending, as Congress intended, not to replace it. And we are happy the House adopted Rep. Geanie Morrison's amendment to require the entire Legislature to appropriate stimulus funds and not leave the decision to the governor or a small group of lawmakers.

Now, we urge the conference committee that will write the final version of the budget to adopt both those amendments, and we call on the Legislature to add the full \$18 billion to the public education budget. Congress allocated this money to help Texas public schools operate safely during the pandemic and recoup some of their emergency expenses.

Congress did not intend for the Legislature to spend the stimulus funds on other programs. Congress did not intend for the Legislature to use the stimulus funds to replace state education spending. And Congress did not intend for the Legislature to leave the funds unspent, while schools, students and educators are in critical need of emergency assistance.

The overwhelming, bipartisan vote for the anti-voucher amendment by Reps. Abel Herrero and Gary VanDeaver sends a strong message: Our state representatives and the people they represent do not want their public school tax dollars diverted to private schools. We call on budget conferees to also keep this amendment in the final appropriations bill.