

Testimony before the House Committee on Education and the Workforce  
Member Day Hearing  
Congresswoman Susie Lee (NV-03)

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Chairman Walberg, Ranking Member Scott, and members of the House Committee on Education and the Workforce, thank you for providing me with the opportunity to share my perspective on issues under the Committee's jurisdiction.

I am proud product of the public education system and put myself through college with a combination of part-time jobs, scholarships, and loans. Before coming to Congress, I spent more than two decades working with Nevada schools to support students, prevent dropouts, and strengthen our public education system. As a lifelong education advocate, I know that education is the key to opportunity.

That's why I introduced the *Keep Our Promise to America's Children and Teachers Act (H.R. 869)* to ensure school districts in Nevada and across the country have the resources they need to strengthen opportunities for all students — regardless of the extra needs they may have or what zip code they live in.

This bill would put Congress on a fiscally responsible path to meet its obligation to fully fund Title I and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) on a mandatory basis over the next 10 years.

More than 200 schools across Nevada's Clark County School District rely on Title I funding, which gives assistance to America's highest-need schools, but the program has been seriously underfunded for decades at the federal level. From 2005 to 2017, Title I was underfunded by about \$347 billion, preventing southern Nevada schools from addressing critical issues like school safety, teacher retention, and mental health.

Similarly, chronic underfunding of IDEA has shortchanged Nevada schools by an estimated \$1.96 billion in IDEA grants between 2005 and 2017, greatly diminishing their ability to serve children with disabilities.

As elected officials, it is our responsibility to ensure all students in our communities have the resources and opportunities they need to succeed. That means we must fully fund these vital programs, not tear them apart.

While the current Administration continues to undermine access to education by dismantling the Department of Education and defunding critical programs, I remain committed to working with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to improve educational opportunities and outcomes for our communities.

Nevada currently has the fewest teachers per students in the country, with an average of 43 teachers per 1,000 students. With this shortage already straining in-classroom demands, the supply of targeted after-school resources is especially affected, emphasizing the need to support workforce development for teachers as well as fill the gap in additional tutoring needs.

To address this gap, I lead the bipartisan ***Partnering Aspiring Teachers with High-Need Schools (PATHS) to Tutor Act***, which I will be reintroducing in the coming weeks. This bill expands access to one-on-one and small group tutoring for students in underserved communities. The legislation also leverages our existing workforce pool and creates new opportunities for future teachers by placing teacher-candidates in these tutoring roles.

By placing teacher-candidates into tutoring roles, this bill strengthens the pipeline of future teachers in the long run, while ensuring students in underserved communities receive targeted academic support in the short run.

And finally, as we aim to meet the needs of all students, it's essential that we support evidence-based methods to address in- and out-of-school barriers to learning. Community schools are key to addressing these barriers.

That's why I also lead the ***Full-Service Community School Expansion Act***, which I will be reintroducing in the coming months. This legislation expands the Full-Service Community Schools grant program to meet the demand across the country for wraparound services to support struggling students and families.

A full-service community school is a public elementary or secondary school that participates in a community-based effort to coordinate and integrate educational, developmental, family, health, and other comprehensive services through community-based organizations and public and private partnerships; and provides in-school access to such services to students, families, and the community.

As the former President of Communities in Schools (CIS) of Nevada, I understand just how valuable the work of community schools is for their communities. CIS of Nevada is an education non-profit serving over 89,000 students annually in Clark

County School District. Their programs are in over 100 schools, focusing on providing equitable access to educational resources and support. In Nevada, 99% of K-11 students involved in CIS programs were promoted to the next grade level and 96% of CIS students go on to graduate.

The model of integrated student supports (ISS) utilized by CIS is a clear example of a proven, evidence-based approach that improve educational outcomes in our communities. With trained site coordinators directly in schools, students are able to receive the resources and support they need to address their unique needs and overcome their challenges. These methods have been proven to increase students' earning potential by 4.3% and improve graduation rates by 3.4%. We must do our part to support community schools that are critical to ensuring everyone has the resources and opportunities they deserve.

I remain committed to working with my colleagues on this Committee to push forward common-sense solutions that ensure access to educational opportunities, support students and teachers, and improve outcomes for students. I encourage the Committee to provide full consideration to the Keep Our PACT Act, PATHS to Tutor Act, and Full-Service Community Schools Expansion Act.

Thank you again for providing this opportunity. I look forward to collaborating with the Committee to make life for Nevadans better.