



National School Boards Association  
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December 13, 2024

The Honorable Mike Johnson  
Speaker of the House  
U.S. House of Representatives  
H-232 The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Johnson:

On behalf of the National School Boards Association (NSBA) and its members, we urge you to prioritize and bring S.2581, the Secure Rural Schools Reauthorization Act of 2023, to a vote before the 2024 legislative session concludes. This bipartisan-supported legislation is vital to extending the Secure Rural Schools (SRS) program through 2026, ensuring that forested counties, including those in Louisiana, can sustain essential services like public education.

Since its enactment in 2000, the SRS program has provided critical stability for counties historically reliant on timber revenues to fund education and infrastructure. Federal policies in the 1980s significantly reduced timber-related revenues, leaving rural counties struggling to meet their funding needs. The SRS program has helped fill this gap by delivering essential financial support. Most recently reauthorized in 2021, the program distributed over [\\$252 million in FY 2023 to more than 700 counties, parishes, and boroughs across the United States.](#) This includes \$685,000 for Grant Parish, \$235,000 for Rapides Parish, and \$329,000 for Winn Parish in Louisiana. These funds directly supported public schools, emergency services, law enforcement, and transportation infrastructure.

Without reauthorization, federal forest payments to counties will lapse, causing severe budget shortfalls in over 700 counties nationwide. This lack of support will jeopardize critical services such as public education, wildfire prevention, and law enforcement, with rural students and underserved communities bearing the brunt of these losses. For example, the SRS funds received in FY 2023 enabled school districts in forested counties to maintain vital programs, ensure safe transportation for students, and sustain public safety efforts. The loss of these

  
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funds would have devastating effects, threatening the educational opportunities and futures of students in these communities.

Your leadership is essential to securing a future where rural students have equitable opportunities to learn and thrive. The bipartisan support for S.2581 demonstrates its importance to communities across the country, and we respectfully request that you bring this legislation to a vote before the end of 2024.

We deeply appreciate your ongoing commitment to America's educators, schools, and students. Together, we can ensure that every child, regardless of their zip code, has access to the resources they need to succeed. We stand ready to work with you and your colleagues to secure the continued success of this critical program.

Thank you for your leadership and service.

Sincerely,

National School Boards Association  
Association of Alaska School Boards  
Colorado Association of School Boards  
Connecticut Association of Boards of Education  
Indiana School Boards Association  
Maine School Boards Association  
Michigan Association of School Boards  
Nevada Association of School Boards  
New York State School Boards Association  
Rhode Island Association of School Committees  
Oregon School Boards Association  
Vermont School Boards Association  
Washington State School Directors' Association (WSSDA)  
WSSDA Trust Lands Advisory Committee

Cc: Members of the U.S. House of Representatives



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