

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 10, 2021

The Honorable Robert J. Fenton, Jr.
Senior Official Performing the Duties of FEMA Administrator
Federal Emergency Management Agency
500 C Street S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20472

Dear Mr. Fenton:

We write today to urge the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to review and retroactively approve Public Assistance requests from schools and other education facilities for eligible emergency protective measures necessary during the COVID-19 pandemic.

We were pleased when the Biden administration recently expanded eligible expenses for Public Assistance by directing FEMA to reimburse schools for certain costs associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, including the purchase of personal protective equipment and disinfecting services¹. We understand that this decision requires FEMA to create new guidance documents to ensure effective implementation of this change to the Public Assistance program, and we appreciate FEMA's work to implement this change expeditiously.

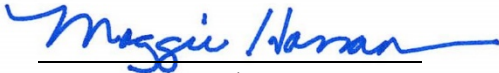
While FEMA works to ensure that these expenses will be eligible for reimbursement going forward, it is critical that FEMA retroactively applies this decision to expenses incurred since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Biden administration has already announced retroactive changes to FEMA Public Assistance for COVID-19 related to the federal cost share of Public Assistance, stating that the agency will be, "...retroactively reimbursing states fully for FEMA-eligible services – including masks, gloves, emergency feeding actions, sheltering at risk populations, and mobilization of the National Guard – back dated to the beginning of the pandemic in January 2020²." In the wake of this announcement, we urge the Biden administration to extend this same retroactive reimbursement change to Public Assistance for schools for these newly eligible expenses.

¹ <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2021/01/21/extend-federal-support-to-governors-use-of-national-guard-to-respond-to-covid-19-and-to-increase-reimbursement-and-other-assistance-provided-to-states/>

² <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/02/02/fact-sheet-president-biden-announces-increased-vaccine-supply-initial-launch-of-the-federal-retail-pharmacy-program-and-expansion-of-fema-reimbursement-to-states/>

We look forward to working with FEMA and the entire Biden administration to support our schools throughout the course of this pandemic. Please do not hesitate to contact our staff with any questions you may have.

Sincerely,



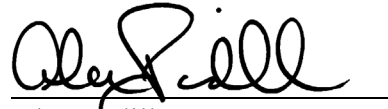
Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator



Jacky Rosen
United States Senator



Kyrsten Sinema
United States Senator



Alex Padilla
United States Senator

