

*March 27th, 2012*

Washington, DC— Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro (CT-3), Ranking Member on the Labor, Health, and Human Services Appropriations Subcommittee, made the following opening statement at the Committee's hearing with school superintendents from across the country on education in the 2013 budget today.

As Prepared for Delivery:

"Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you to the superintendents who have come to testify before us today.

"Dr. Freeman, Dr. Seaver, Dr. Mitchell, and Dr. Starr – Thank you all -- for taking the time to join us this morning and for all you do to improve education in your communities. I am looking forward to hear your thoughts and insights on the 2013 education budget.

"Yours is not an easy job, and I know the budget situation in recent years has made it particularly hard. According to the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities, 37 states across the nation provided less funding per student to local school districts in the 2011-2012 school year than they did the year before, and 30 states are providing less than they did in 2008 – sometimes significantly less. So I want you to know I very much appreciate your hard work and commitment in these difficult times.

"These huge state and local cuts – sometimes as much as 20% in states like California and South Carolina – make our continued federal support to K-12 education more vital than ever. With that in mind, I am pleased that, in a time of severe budget constraints, Chairman Rehberg and I were able to secure modest increases for some of our key formula funding K-12 programs, like Title I and IDEA, in the 2012 budget.

"That being said, the 2013 budget poses new challenges. For one, the president's budget

continues to shift resources away from formula funding programs and toward a competitive grant model. In their budget proposal, formula funds fall by \$1.2 billion, while competitive grants go up by \$2.8 billion. Both the Chairman and I are troubled about this shift in priorities, and we voiced our concerns to the Secretary of Education when he was before us last week.

"I am even more concerned by what I am seeing in the Majority's recently released budget proposal, put forward by Budget Committee Chairman Ryan. Like H.R. 1, the Majority's original budget proposal for 2012, this plan cuts deeply into federal support for education.

"Under the new Ryan plan, Title I would face a 5.4 percent cut next year, and an 18.9 percent cut in 2014. That would mean that over 12,000 schools, serving close to five million disadvantaged students, would be denied funding – and 49,000 teachers and aides could lose their jobs over the next two years.

"IDEA is similarly impacted. If the Majority's cuts were enacted, close to 35,000 special education teachers and aides serving children with disabilities could lose their jobs over the same time period.

"The majority's proposed cuts notwithstanding, we still must also contend with the impact of the upcoming budget sequestration called for by the Budget Control Act. Because the deficit super-committee failed to come to an agreement last year, \$1.2 trillion in automatic cuts go into effect in January of 2013, meaning an eight percent cut across the board to domestic and military federal spending.

"Depending on the estimate, this sequestration would cut the Department of Education's budget next year by between \$3.5 and \$4.1 billion. That means as many as 7.5 million students would be impacted by reduced aid and services, and up to 51,000 teachers, aides, and staff could lose their jobs – This goes up to 89,000 jobs lost if you count Head Start.

"My state, for example, would lose close to \$9 million in funding, hurting over 8600 students and costing 100 jobs. California would see a \$150 million cut, impacting 300,000 students and costing close to 1700 jobs.

"I am sure I do not need to tell you the profound impact these cuts would have on our school systems, especially in the current environment where every penny is already stretched so thin. As superintendents on the front lines, you know exactly what they mean.

"They mean overcrowded classrooms and overworked teachers. They mean further cuts to after-school programs, arts, sports, and even key subjects like history. And they may even mean more drastic changes. Many school districts have switched to four-day weeks to save money. And, of course, more layoffs mean more unemployment and more economic misery.

"So I hope today you can give us a sense of the unique challenges that your districts and states are facing on the ground, and how federal dollars are being best leveraged to help your students. In the end, education is local, so I am excited to have a collection of administrators here today from all corners of our country.

"Thank you all again for coming, and for the hard work and service you provide our communities and nation. You are often unsung heroes, so I want to commend you for your willingness to tackle one of our greatest challenges – ensuring that all our children are given the best opportunities to succeed. I look forward to benefiting from your expertise today. Thank you."

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