



## **Support Murkowski Amendment 1233:**

### **1 in 4 Homeless Children Are Missing From School**

**Request:** The flexible structure of the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund is not serving children experiencing homelessness effectively. Therefore, the Alliance for Excellent Education and SchoolHouse Connection urge the Senate to include [Murkowski Amendment 1233](#) in the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). This amendment allocates \$800 million from ESSER to support education and wraparound services for homeless children.

**Rationale:**

- (1) **Homeless children are not being effectively served under ESSER.** The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) allows, but does not require, ESSER funds to support homeless children through EHCY. Evidence suggests this flexible approach is not serving children experiencing homelessness effectively.

In a survey of 1,444 school district homeless liaisons conducted in September and October of 2020, only [18 percent](#) indicated that CARES Act funds were being used to support homeless children. In addition, an analysis conducted by the Center for Reinventing Public Education found that only 17 percent of the district COVID-19 plans they analyzed described strategies to support homeless students, "[signaling that these students are not being prioritized for assistance.](#)"

In part because the CARES Act did not specifically allocate funding to support children experiencing homelessness, [one in four homeless children \(420,000 homeless children\)](#) have gone unidentified and unenrolled in public schools. These students are [disproportionately students of color](#), English learners, and students with disabilities. Without direct funding (not just an allowable use), these children are not being enrolled in school. Homeless children are too easily overlooked among competing demands.

- (2) **ESSER breaks precedent; EHCY usually receives direct funding during national emergencies.** Because of the unique challenges facing children experiencing homelessness, the Education for Homeless Children and Youth Act (EHCY) usually receives targeted funding in legislation responding to national emergencies. For example, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act provided an additional \$70 million for EHCY. Relief legislation responding to Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria, and wildfires have provided targeted funding for EHCY. Even the Housing and Economic Recovery Act of 2008 included support for EHCY.
- (3) **Other homeless aid in ARPA is primarily for housing and shelter.** While this is critically important, it does not address the educational needs or barriers faced by children and youth regarding school enrollment and academic success.
- (4) **\$800 million is less than one percent of the \$125.8 billion included in ARPA for K-12 education.**

For additional information, please contact Phillip Lovell ([plovell@all4ed.org](mailto:plovell@all4ed.org)) or Barbara Duffield ([barbara@schoolhouseconnection.org](mailto:barbara@schoolhouseconnection.org)).