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Virgin Islands



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Governor Mike Parson  
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# Education, Workforce and Community Investment Task Force

## OUR JURISDICTION

The Education, Workforce and Community Investment Task Force has organizational jurisdiction over a broad range of issues including Labor and Workforce Development, Career and Technical Skills, PreK-12 Education, Postsecondary Education, Criminal Justice, Housing, and Agriculture.

## OUR PRIORITIES

Farm Bill Reauthorization, ensuring resiliency and rural revitalization;

Improve workforce housing supply and affordability;

Strengthen state and territorial unemployment insurance systems;

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) reauthorization and strengthening the public workforce system; and

Support academic recovery efforts and state and territorial education financing.

## OUR WORK

### Sending Funding Priorities to Congress

In May 2023, the Task Force wrote to House and Senate Appropriators expressing support for funding priorities that fall within its jurisdiction. Those priorities include funding for programs within the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, the Perkins Career and Technical Education Act, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and funding for apprenticeships. The funding request also called for continued investment in state and local law enforcement programs, affordable housing programs, farm bill and rural development programs, as well as the need to modernize state unemployment insurance systems and make them more resilient to economic downturns.

### Partnering with Teachers, Chief State School Officers, and Private Sector to Support Teacher Registered Apprenticeships

In August 2022, the Biden-Harris Administration convened at the White House the National Governors Association, the Council of Chief State School Officers, the National Education Association, the American Federation of Teachers, the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, ZipRecruiter, Indeed, and Handshake, to support the expansion of registered teacher apprenticeship programs and other efforts to support teacher recruitment. Executive leadership at these organizations were joined by First Lady Jill Biden, U.S. Education Secretary Miguel Cardona, U.S. Labor Secretary Marty Walsh and Ambassador Susan Rice, where they discussed how the federal government can work with state and local governments, education organizations and the private sector to support teachers and strengthen the profession through initiatives such as teacher registered apprenticeships.

### Bringing Together State, Federal and Practitioner Leaders to Discuss Teacher Shortages

In July 2022, the Task Force hosted a virtual discussion on the state of the educator workforce alongside state and federal representatives, as well as a practitioner who represents colleges of teacher education. The discussion covered short- and long-term solutions to the teacher shortage crisis as schools prepare for the upcoming 2022/23 school year.

### Ensuring Access to Summer Meals & Child Nutrition Programs

In June 2022, Task Force Co-Chairs, Governor Parson and Governor Bryan, Jr., urged Congress to take quick action on the Keep Kids Fed Act. Governors have seen schools across the states and territories continue to deal with challenges, including food service supply chains issues. This bipartisan compromise ensures access to summer meals, allows children who are eligible to receive reduced-price school meals to receive free school meals, and streamlines healthy meals for children in family childcare. Following advocacy by Governors, the bill was signed into law before the June 30 expiration deadline.

### Voicing Support for School and Community Safety Legislation After Tragedies in Buffalo, NY and Uvalde, TX

In the wake of the shootings in Buffalo, NY, and Uvalde, TX, the National Governors Association established a bipartisan working group to drive solutions on school and community safety and called on Congress to pass the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act. Within days, Congress passed the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act, which provides critical resources to states and territories to enhance gun safety, make school campuses safer, and support school and community-based mental health care.