



Updates from the Office of Congressman Andy Barr

For the week of August 14, 2020

TRUMP ADMINISTRATION PRIORITIZES SCHOOLS SAFELY REOPENING

- Earlier this week, the President, along with Vice President Pence, Secretary DeVos, and Kellyanne Conway, held an [event](#) with teachers, parents, and experts to talk about the steps the Administration is taking to ensure that schools can reopen safely.
- The Administration believes many school districts can now reopen safely, provided they implement mitigation measures and health protocols to protect families, protect teachers, and to protect students.
- By supporting the resumption of in-person schooling, President Trump is standing up for the well-being of American children who need to get back in the classroom and working parents.
- Children are at an extremely low risk for a serious illness or death from COVID-19, far less than adults and even less than from seasonal influenza.
- The social costs to children and families of keeping schools closed in terms of harm to children's wellbeing outweigh the risks presented by the safe reopening of in-person classes.
- The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) has called for the safe reopening of schools this fall and for in-person classes to resume, citing how schools reduce a child's risk of abuse, drug addiction, and suicide.
- The AAP has also found that school closures have a "substantial impact on food security and physical activity for children and families."
- The overwhelming majority of public K-12 teachers are young – 92% are under 60 years of age – and in the absence of certain underlying medical conditions are likely at lower risk for serious illness, hospitalization, or death.
- Teachers and students who are at increased risk or higher risk can be protected, and if desired, can choose to work from home.

PRESIDENT TRUMP PROVIDES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SAFE REOPENING, WHILE EMPOWERING FAMILIES TO MAKE BEST DECISION FOR THEIR CHILDREN

- Ensuring all students, teachers and staff understand symptoms and risk-factors of COVID-19.
- Requiring all students, teachers and staff to self-assess their health every morning before school.
- Encouraging frequent handwashing or sanitizing during the school day, beginning as students enter each morning and ensuring handwashing facilities are available throughout the school.
- Minimize large indoor group gatherings by holding large gatherings outside whenever possible.
- Maintain high standards of hygiene and ventilation within all classrooms, including keeping windows and doors open and running fans and AC units whenever possible.
- Require students, teachers, and staff to socially distance around high-risk individuals.
- Encourage the use of masks when social distancing is not possible.
- Liberally post instructions regarding hygiene and social distancing around the school.

PRESIDENT TRUMP'S GUIDANCE TO PROTECT HIGH-RISK TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

- Students, their families, teachers, and staff should consult with their medical providers to determine if they are at high-risk from COVID-19.
- Provide high-risk teachers the choice to stay home and engage in distance teaching.
- Provide high-risk students, or students who have high-risk family members, the choice to stay home and engage in distance learning.
- Provide high-risk staff options to modify their work routines.
- Strongly encourage high-risk students, teachers, and staff to maintain social distance, avoid crowded gatherings, and wear masks when social distancing is not possible.
- Train school medical personnel regarding the symptoms of COVID-19; maintain isolation areas for those who become symptomatic to use while they await transportation away from school.

PRESIDENT TRUMP'S SUPPORT TO REOPEN SCHOOLS IS BASED ON SCIENCE, DATA AND COMMONSENSE

- The unintended consequences of keeping schools closed could damage our children's education for years to come and hinder our Nation's economic comeback.
- Cancelling in-person classes and allowing only virtual learning disproportionately harms the education of lower income children.
- During school closures in the spring, students' math progress in low-income zip codes decreased by roughly 50% and students in middle-income zip codes fell by a third.

- A recent analysis found that if in-person classes don't resume until January 2021, Hispanic, Black, and low-income students will lose 9.2, 10.3, and 12.4 months of learning, respectively.
- Each and every parent needs the confidence that when they are on the job their children will be well cared for.
- Over 90% of children aged 6-17 have at least one employed parent – many of whom will have to stay home and care for their child if schools fail to reopen.
- Peer countries have sufficiently reopened schools to better educate their children, while the United States has fallen behind with continued closures – potentially leaving our country and our children with a competitive disadvantage.
- The education of children is more than an essential business – it's a top national priority to ensure America can continue to aggressively compete with the rest of the world.

THE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION IS PROVIDING STUDENTS AND EDUCATORS THE RESOURCES THEY NEED TO CONTINUE LEARNING AND TEACHING

- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has provided comprehensive guidelines to schools on how to protect and identify high-risk individuals, prevent the spread of the virus, and conduct safe in-person teaching.
- The President has called for Congress to pass \$105 billion - \$70 billion of which is for K-12 schools – to provide financial assistance and incentives to help schools implement safety measures in their resumption of in-person classes.
- President Trump is also calling on Congress to pass the School Choice Now Act, which includes his groundbreaking Education Freedom Scholarships proposal, to give students and families the resources and power to select the right education setting for them.
- President Trump delivered \$13 billion in funding to states to support K-12 education, which can be used to help schools safely reopen.
- The Trump Administration also applauds many States that have utilized Federal CARES Act Coronavirus Relief Fund dollars to prioritize the safe reopening of schools.
- The Trump Administration is also working on a plan to provide millions of reusable face coverings to States for students, teachers, and staff.

DEMOCRATS BLOCK RELIEF FOR THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

- On Wednesday, Secretary Mnuchin spoke to Speaker Pelosi and the Speaker reiterated that she is unwilling to continue negotiations unless her partisan wishlist was included in the final legislation. Following the conversation, Secretary Mnuchin released the following statement:

“Earlier today, Speaker Pelosi and I spoke by phone. Her statement is not an accurate reflection of our conversation. She made clear that she was unwilling to meet to continue negotiations unless we agreed in advance to her proposal, costing at least \$2 trillion.

“The Administration is willing to move forward with legislation that allows for

substantial funds for schools, child care, food, vaccines, hospitals, PPP for small businesses, rental assistance, broadband, airports, state and local government assistance, and liability protection for universities, schools, and businesses. The Democrats have no interest in negotiating.”

- Meanwhile, Leader McConnell spoke on the [Senate floor yesterday](#) on how the Democrats’ partisan games are prolonging the nations plan:

“The Secretary of the Treasury and the White House Chief of Staff have given ground. They’ve put new issues on the table that Democrats wanted. They’ve worked to find commonality. But the Democrats are barely even pretending to negotiate. Barely even pretending. The Speaker’s latest spin is that it is some heroic sacrifice to lower her demand from a made-up three-and-a-half-trillion-dollar marker that was never going to become law... to an equally made-up two-and-a-half trillion-dollar marker.

“She calls this meeting in the middle. That’s not negotiating. That’s throwing spaghetti at the wall to see what sticks. People who have serious policy proposals that are fitted to actual needs cannot breezily knock off a trillion here, and add a trillion there. Heck — by the Speaker’s logic, they should have just opened with their entire 93-trillion-dollar Green New Deal! Then they could have blamed the President for not meeting them halfway at the cut-rate bargain sum of 45 trillion dollars!

“Come on. Come on. In point of fact, the Speaker and the Leader have not conceded anything. They haven’t budged on their absurd demands. They just moved up the expiration date a few weeks on the exact same crazy wish-list, so the price tag comes down without moving an inch on the merits. And they’ve refused Republicans’ offers to pass everything that we can agree to, right now. Republicans don’t think the disputed issues should hold up the most urgent aid for working families.

“But Democrats say no. Their partisan games continue. And so the nation’s pain continues, too. Laid-off workers, and kids, and parents, and doctors and nurses are waiting for help. Our people are waiting for help. Republicans have been at the table for weeks. We just need seriousness on the other side. American families’ livelihoods are at stake. American lives are at stake. Democrats must re-run their political calculations and finally let Congress act.”

PRESIDENT TRUMP BROKERS DEAL WITH ISRAEL AND THE UAE

- President Trump secured a historic deal between Israel and the United Arab Emirates to advance peace and prosperity in the region – the first such agreement between Israel and a major Arab country since 1994.
- The countries have committed to the exchange of embassies and ambassadors, and to begin cooperation in a broad range of fields including education, healthcare, trade, and security.

- This historic breakthrough is the most significant step toward peace in the Middle East in over 25 years.
- The United Arab Emirates is the first major Arab state to recognize Israel since the Israel-Jordan Peace Treaty was signed on October 26, 1994.
- This historic breakthrough was made possible by President Trump's leadership and expertise as a dealmaker.
- The President built trust with our regional allies and reoriented their strategic calculus by identifying shared interests and common opportunities, moving them away from perpetuating old conflicts.
- This deal provides a foundation for further advances toward regional peace in the future.
- The United States believes that more Arab and Muslim countries will follow the United Arab Emirates' lead and normalize relations with Israel.
- This agreement will help put the region on a truly transformative path: one with stability, security, and opportunity.
- This agreement is a major breakthrough for Muslims throughout the world who wish to come in peace to pray at the Al Aqsa Mosque, as they will now be able to fly to Tel Aviv through Abu Dhabi to do so and will be welcomed.
- By encouraging more visits, it will help counter the extremists who use the false narrative that the Al Aqsa Mosque is under attack and that Muslims cannot pray at this holy site.
- Expanded business and financial ties between these two thriving economies will also accelerate growth and economic opportunity across the Middle East.
- This agreement will allow further advancement of the President's vision for finding a comprehensive, fair, realistic, and lasting peace between Israel and the Palestinians and in the region.
- Following President Trump's leadership in recognizing Jerusalem as the rightful capital of Israel, moving the U.S. embassy there, and recognizing the Golan Heights as part of Israel, this agreement is another example showing about how he stands with our most important ally in the Middle East in contrast to the foreign policy of the Obama-Biden Administration.

MORE INFORMATION

- You can find more information on school reopening guidelines [here](#).
- More information on the Israel and UAE agreement can be found [here](#), and a joint statement between the leaders of each nation can be found [here](#).