

# Statement of Congressman Danny K. Davis Supporting H.R. 1586, the Education Jobs and Medicaid Assistance Act

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August 10, 2010

Madam

Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity to vote on this important bill that will provide critical aid to states and local governments. The House of Representatives twice has passed bills to provide federal assistance for education and health. I am pleased that we finally are able to deliver this desperately needed federal support to our constituents.

I support this legislation because it will provide essential assistance to Chicago, Illinois, and the nation. The Illinois Association of School Administrators estimates that Illinois will lose more than 20,000 education-related jobs for the upcoming school year. The state of Illinois anticipates receiving approximately \$415 million to keep 5,700 teachers in the classroom. My Congressional District is expected to receive approximately \$36 million to keep 508 educators teaching my young constituents. This \$415 million will provide a lifeline to local school districts with straining budgets to preserve some of these jobs, improving children's learning and the economic well-being of my state and the nation.

In addition to this vital education funding, this bill will provide \$550 million to help cover 300,000 Illinoisans on Medicaid — preserving services, allowing timely payments to providers, and creating thousands of jobs. These are not theoretical numbers; to people in Chicago and Illinois, they are very real people who benefit. The beneficiaries are mothers, fathers, young adults, senior citizens, and children in Illinois. The beneficiaries are the teachers, firefighters, and police officers who will continue to work as educators and protectors of our communities. The beneficiaries are small businesses in the private sector who contract with state and local governments to provide health-related work.

Given the desperate need for this funding in my District and state, I cast my vote in support for this federal aid to preserve education jobs and health services for low-income persons. This said, I wish to voice my disappointment that one of the offsets for this bill sent to us by the Senate is a reduction in funding for poor families in need of federal aid to purchase food. Children and families who receive food assistance are some of our most vulnerable citizens. In 2009, 1.46 million Illinoisans in 677,000 households received food stamps with an average per month of about \$136 for a total benefit value issued of \$2.3 billion. There are many poor families in Chicago and Illinois who need the full amount of the food benefits. Even if the impact is a few years away, I am disappointed that my vote to provide almost one billion of federal assistance to my state occurs by reducing future benefits to the

poor. I vow to work actively with my colleagues to replace this funding so that no reduction in food assistance comes to fruition.