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Nearly 250,000 education jobs at risk if Congress eliminates state and local tax deduction

Lois Kilby-Chesley: Possible draconian cuts to public education could lead to ballooning class sizes

Washington—As part of its \$5 trillion tax plan giveaway to the wealthiest and corporations, the U.S. House Republican leadership bill eliminates most of the state and local tax deduction (SALT). Its elimination could blow a hole in state and local revenue to support public education and put nearly 250,000 education jobs at risk according to a detailed analysis of the impact of House Tax Bill (HR 1) on funding for public education conducted by the National Education Association. **Maine could see 1,022 education jobs at risk if Congress eliminates SALT. For a state-by-state breakdown of the impact of eliminating SALT, please click on this [link](#).**

“The Republican leadership’s tax plan is another example of misguided priorities in Washington,” said NEA President Lily Eskelsen García. “The plan is a tax giveaway to the wealthiest and corporations paid for on the backs of working people, students and educators.”

The NEA analysis also showed that nationally the bill would lead to cuts of approximately \$250 billion in public education funding over the next ten years. Corporations, by the way, get to keep their state and local tax deductions. A cut of this magnitude is akin to eliminating the Title I and IDEA special education programs overnight. If enacted, the elimination of state and local tax deduction could have a negative, ripple effect on states’ and local communities’ ability to fund public services such as public education. **In Maine, that amounts to \$92,522,000.**

“Eliminating the state and local tax deduction would jeopardize the ability of our state and local governments to adequately fund public education,” said Lois Kilby-Chesley, President of the Maine Education Association. “This will translate into cuts to public schools, lost jobs to educators, overcrowded classrooms that deprive students of one-on-one attention, and threats to public education.”

The impact of eliminating SALT on public education is nearly equal to the education jobs lost during the Great Recession. By most accounts, the country lost about 300,000 education jobs during that time. To cope with the economic crisis our country faced, schools made draconian cuts to public education funding that had a negative impact on students. In addition to losing teachers, school aides, and other key education support professionals, some school districts

reduced the number of school days from five to four; critical education programs (before and after school programs, kindergarten) also took a hit. Class sizes ballooned.

The Republican leadership bill comes as the nation also faces a teacher shortage. At the start of the 2017-18 school year, every state in the country was facing a teacher shortage. In addition, according to the [Washington Post](#), school districts also are struggling to fill positions in math, reading and English language arts, as well as finding substitute teachers.

“Instead of tax cuts for the wealthy, we must ensure that our students have caring, qualified, and committed educators in order to succeed. Now here come the tax cuts for the rich paid for by students and middle-class families,” said Kilby-Chesley. “This bill is terrible for our state because it is a giveaway for the wealthy and corporations funded on the backs of our students and the middle class. We urge Congress to reject it.”

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The National Education Association (nea.org) is the nation's largest professional employee organization, representing more than 3 million elementary and secondary teachers, higher education faculty, education support professionals, school administrators, retired educators, and students preparing to become teachers.