



May 12, 2009

To: All Members of the U.S. House of Representatives
Re: Opposition to H.R.2187, the “21st Century Green High-Performing Public School Facilities Act”

Dear Members of the U.S. House of Representatives,

We write to urge your opposition to H.R.2187, the “21st Century Green High-Performing Public School Facilities Act.” The bill should be rejected for a number of reasons:

By committing federal funds to the tune of \$20 billion over the next five years to make grants to state educational agencies for the modernization, renovation, or repair of public school facilities, **the bill represents an unwarranted and costly expansion of the federal government’s role in education currently resting with state and local governments.**

The bill would tack onto the ill-conceived trillion dollar spending and debt package passed under the guise of economic “stimulus,” which already committed a significant amount of funds to the “modernization, renovation, or repair of public school facilities and institutions of higher education facilities, including modernization, renovation, and repairs that are consistent with a recognized green building rating system.”

Not only should the responsibility to modernize, renovate and repair school facilities stay with state and local governments. **Saddling already costly school-construction programs with additional federal regulations will certainly drive up costs,** and the fact that the bill would not only seek to impose “green” standards, but would also apply Davis-Bacon prevailing wage mandates only aggravates the burden this bill would impose.

Davis-Bacon prevailing wage mandates causes construction wages to become inflated nationally by 22 percent. However in some areas, such as Maine and South Carolina, construction wages are 15-55 percent below market wages due to prevailing wage laws. Also, forced compliance with these outdated mandates increase the cost of construction projects nationally by \$8.6 billion – a cost that is passed on to the taxpayers. The difference between having a prevailing wage or not, is the difference between building three schools or four.

For these reasons, we urge you to vote against H.R.2187, the “21st Century Green High-Performing Public School Facilities Act,” when it reaches the floor.

Sincerely,

Grover Norquist
President
Americans for Tax Reform

Sandra Fabry
Executive Director
Center for Fiscal Accountability

Brian Johnson
Executive Director
Alliance for Worker Freedom