

# Recovery Act Provides Billions for AFT Priorities

The \$787 billion American Recovery and Reinvestment Act that President Obama signed into law on Feb. 17 will save and create 3 million to 4 million jobs, jump-start the economy, help states deal with the unprecedented budget deficits they face, and provide huge new investments in education, healthcare and other public services.

"While no legislation of this size is perfect, the final bill includes many of the AFT's priorities, chief among being investing in our families', students' and communities' future," says AFT legislative director Tor Cowan, who prepared a summary of the wide-ranging legislation.

A key provision in the final bill is a \$53 billion State Fiscal Stabilization Fund. The fund is intended to help states maintain support for critical public services, such as education and healthcare. The ARRA also includes unprecedented funding for federal education programs, including Title I, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, higher education, early childhood education, school construction and scientific research, as well as a significant increase in the federal medical assistance Medicaid funding to the states.

Beginning last October, in congressional testimony by AFT president Randi Weingarten, and continuing with the "[Fight for America's Future: It's Dollars and Sense](#)" campaign, the AFT has consistently urged policymakers to reinvest, not disinvest, in public education, healthcare and other essential public services to ensure the strength of our nation's economy. And Congress got the message, as AFT members from across the country mobilized, sending more than 30,000 letters and making thousands of phone calls urging their congressional representatives to pass the economic recovery bill. AFT members also have held rallies, testified at school board meetings and traveled to the nation's capital to talk with their members of Congress.

First, here is a general summary of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. The final legislation includes approximately \$105.9 billion for education and training overall, including the following investments:

- \$53.6 billion for a State Fiscal Stabilization Fund focused primarily on education;
- \$13 billion for Title I;
- \$12.2 billion for IDEA;
- \$24.8 billion for local school construction bonds under the ABC school construction tax proposal;
- \$15.6 billion for Pell Grants;
- \$4.1 billion for early child development programs: \$2 billion for the Child Care and Development Block Grant, and \$2.1 billion split between Head Start and Early Head Start; and
- \$3.95 billion for job training.

A [longer summary](#) that provides more details about each of the major components of key interest to the AFT is available. The final legislative text is still being released, so details may change slightly.

More information also can be found in tables that outline estimates [state by state](#) as well as [local school district](#) allocations, and in details from the [House Committee on Education and Labor](#). [Dan Gursky, Tor Cowan]

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