

## ACTION SHEET

### Media Action: Letter to the editor requesting READ Act co-sponsors

Brighter futures, healthier communities, and increased economic growth for people and whole countries. This is the power of education. U.S. partnerships with countries affected severely by poverty have helped countries build stronger education systems around the world. These efforts have ended school fees, built schools, funded buses, trained teachers, and more. Without a doubt, these partnerships have helped connect kids with the education they deserve.

The world has set global goals to ensure all children get a quality education by 2030. But COVID-19 and other disasters (e.g., wars, climate emergencies, other pandemics like tuberculosis) have harmed students around the world. In fact, new data from UNESCO brings home the crisis. UNESCO reports that 250 million school-age children are not in school, 6 million more than in 2021. The bottom line? One in six of the world's children are not getting the education they deserve. In order for the world to achieve the 2030 goals, we must enroll one child in school every two seconds between now and that date.

The longer children are out of school, the less likely they are to return. The World Bank says that this generation of students will lose about \$17 trillion in lifetime earnings. And quality primary education isn't the only challenge. Around 200 million youth ages 12-17 are currently out of secondary school. Eighty percent of children in countries most affected by poverty lack access to preschool.

The U.S. does have a policy that has helped address this global education access issue, and it needs reauthorization this month (September). The READ Act Reauthorization Act of 2023 was introduced by Representatives Chris Smith (R-NJ) and Grace Meng (D-NY) in the House. It was introduced by Senators Dick Durbin (D-IL) and Marco Rubio (R-FL) in the Senate. The legislation renews the original 2017 READ Act for five more years. The legislation would continue current U.S. efforts to expand and support access to education for children everywhere. The READ Act Reauthorization also requires the U.S. government to update its strategy to improve foundational literacy and numeracy in global basic education. There will also be new, rigorous monitoring and evaluation for a yearly report to Congress and the public as part of this new version of the READ Act.

The U.S. government has long been a leader in global education, and the READ Act increased the impact of this work. Reauthorizing for another five years will maintain and improve an effective global education strategy. It will also ensure the U.S. does its part to make sure all kids can realize their right to learn.

**Will you write a letter to the editor today to your senators and representative(s) and ask for co-sponsorship of the READ Act? Read on for support in your advocacy.**

### **Sample Letter to the Editor in EPIC Format**

Consider organizing a group outreach activity. Invite RESULTS group members and others who care about these issues to write to Congress. You can find a [sample letter-writing meeting agenda here](#).

### **Subject for letter: Please co-sponsor the READ Act**

**Engage:** Young people around the world have returned to classrooms. But we know that COVID-19 closed schools and interrupted learning for almost all the world's 1.5 billion school-aged children. The learning loss has been devastating.

**State Problem:** UNESCO reports that 250 million school-age children are not in school, 6 million more than in 2021. The bottom line? One in six of the world's children are not getting the education they deserve. And in order for the world to achieve its 2030 education goals, we must enroll one child in school every two seconds between now and that date.

**Inform:** But there is hope. Congress passed the READ Act in 2017. It boosted U.S. leadership on global education to help ensure all children—especially those facing poverty and other barriers—have access to quality education. Now Congress has a chance to continue this leadership for another five years. How? Through the READ Act Reauthorization Act of 2023 (H.R. 681, S.41).

**Call to Action:** Our senators and representatives should co-sponsor the READ Act. Over five years, the READ Act has made a difference in the lives of millions of young people. Its reauthorization will allow that difference to continue. We can't wait.