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Booker, Norcross, Pascrell Announce Major Legislation to Address Teacher Shortage

Provisions include increasing investments in teacher preparation programs, financial assistance to encourage diversity in teaching profession

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**CLIFTON, NJ** – Today, U.S. Senator Cory Booker (D-NJ) was joined by U.S. Representative Bill Pascrell, Jr. (NJ-09), New Jersey Education Association President Marie Blistan, and local teachers and students at Clifton Public School 17 in Clifton, New Jersey to announce a major piece of legislation that would help address the teacher shortage the United States is experiencing.

[According to a study from the Learning Policy Institute](https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/coming-crisis-teaching),enrollment in teacher preparation programs has fallen 35% over the past five years. This amounts to a decrease of almost 240,000 potential teachers in the year 2014, as compared to 2009.

The **Supporting the Teaching Profession Through Revitalizing Investments in Valuable Educators (STRIVE) Act**, which will be led by Booker in the Senate and U.S. Representative Donald Norcross (NJ-01) in the House,includes several key provisions to help address this shortage, including increased investments in teacher preparation programs and financial assistance to encourage diversity in teaching profession.

“We must do all we can to prepare each and every child for success, and that means supporting and empowering our teachers in the classroom,” **said Senator Booker.** “Teachers across the country are being asked to do more with less—they’re overworked and under-supported at a time when they are going above and beyond for our students. As the greatest, richest country in the world, we can, and should be doing more to prepare and support the people doing some of the most important jobs in our country – our teachers.”

“Like all Americans, I owe a huge debt of gratitude to the teachers that impacted my life and who prepared my children and grandchildren for their futures. Our education system depends on the amazing men and women who teach our children every day. We must ensure teachers receive all the support they need to shape the next generation. The STRIVE Act means peace of mind for educators across the country and will encourage our best and brightest teachers to serve in high-needs areas, so all our kids can benefit from a great education,” **said Rep. Norcross, a member of the House Committee on Education and the Workforce.**

Specifically, **the STRIVE Act** will:

·      Mandatorily fund and increase funding for programs that prepare and train educators to be their most effective, while allowing early childhood educators to participate in the program.

·      Overhaul the current loan forgiveness program for teachers to provide incremental and complete loan forgiveness to teachers who teach for seven years and grandfathers in those

teachers who have taught for longer and are still paying student loans.

·      Encourage diversity in the teaching profession by providing financial assistance for teaching certification and licensing fees to low-income and other underrepresented communities.

·      Increase the teacher tax credit to better reflect how much of their own money teachers invest in educating our students.

**The STRIVE Act** is endorsed by the National Association for the Education of Young Children; Committee for Children; Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning; First Five Years Foundation; Learning Forward; National Black Child Development Institute; American Federation of Teachers; National Education Association/New Jersey Education Association; Teach Plus; Teach for America; Teaching Matters; Alliance for Excellent Education; The New Teacher Project; National Council for Teachers of English; National Network of State Teachers of the Year; Educators for Excellence; Public Advocacy for Kids; National Board for Professional Teaching Standards; AASA, The School Superintendents Association; Association of Educational Service Agencies; Higher Education Consortium for Special Education; Teacher Education Division of the Council for Exceptional Children; and National Institute for Early Education Research.