



COMMITTEE ON
**EDUCATION
& LABOR**
REPUBLICANS

**COMMITTEE
STATEMENT**

**Opening Statement of Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education
Subcommittee Republican Leader Burgess Owens (R-UT) at Joint Subcommittee
Hearing: "Examining the Implementation of COVID-19 Funds"
November 17, 2021**

(As prepared for delivery)

"The Biden administration has been so wrapped up in trying to implement its radical agenda that the real problems facing K-12 education have taken a backseat.

"If students were the left's true priority, the Biden administration would be offering solutions for the immense damage done by keeping kids out of the classroom for over a year instead of attempting to sic the DOJ on parents at school board meetings.

"But we are here today to talk about oversight—oversight of the exorbitant amounts of money that have been thrown at schools.

"According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, implementing its COVID-19 mitigation strategy would cost \$25 billion at most. Yet, even after Republicans and Democrats in Congress allocated \$70 billion in K-12 relief funds, Democrats insisted on spending another \$120 billion of taxpayer funds on schools under the American Rescue Plan.

"Democrats' radical spending spree should not be seen as anything but a frenzied attempt to score political points with teachers unions. Since spending the money, Democrats have shown little interest in how these funds are being

used or if they are accomplishing their intended purpose.

“Sending 400 percent more to K-12 schools than they normally receive from the Department of Education during a year should warrant transparency and accountability at the very least.

“We have a duty to taxpayers to ensure that their money is being used as effectively and efficiently as possible. However, I am concerned that Democrats created no pathway for us to keep track of how the money they insisted on sending to schools is being spent. This will make it difficult for Congress to fulfill its duty.

“Before I yield back I’d like to express my frustration and disappointment that our witnesses today have failed to submit testimony within the 48 hours included in the Committee Rules, they could not even manage to get it to us within 24 hours. This doesn’t bode well for transparency or accountability, both of which taxpayers deserve.”

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