

RAÚL M. GRIJALVA
3RD DISTRICT, ARIZONA

COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES
CHAIRMAN

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND LABOR
HIGHER EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE INVESTMENT
SUBCOMMITTEE

CIVIL RIGHTS AND HUMAN SERVICES SUBCOMMITTEE
CONGRESSIONAL PROGRESSIVE CAUCUS
CHAIR EMERITUS

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0307

WEBSITE: <http://grijalva.house.gov/>

1511 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515
Phone (202) 225-2435 | Fax (202) 225-1541

101 W. Irvington Rd., BLDG. 4
Tucson, AZ 85714
Phone (520) 622-6788 | Fax (520) 622-0198

146 N. State Ave.
P.O. Box 4105
Somerton, AZ 85350
Phone (928) 343-7933 | Fax (928) 343-7949

1412 N. Central Ave., Suite B
Avondale, AZ 85323
Phone (623) 536-3388 | Fax (623) 535-7479

FACEBOOK: [Facebook.com/Rep.Grijalva](https://www.facebook.com/Rep.Grijalva)
TWITTER: [Twitter.com/RepRaulGrijalva](https://twitter.com/RepRaulGrijalva)
INSTAGRAM: [Instagram.com/RepRaulGrijalva](https://www.instagram.com/RepRaulGrijalva)

January 25, 2022

The Honorable Doug Ducey
Governor of Arizona
State Capitol
1700 W. Washington Street
Phoenix, AZ 85007

Dear Governor Ducey,

I write to urge you to immediately retract and redesignate funds under your Open for Learning Recovery Benefit program which provides up to \$7,000 to families to move children from schools that are forced to close and denies funds to schools taking public health mitigation measures. This program diverts federal COVID-19 relief funds which are intended to provide critical resources to protect our communities during the pandemic. I supported and voted to bring these essential funds to Arizona, and now you are risking having them taken away.

Congressional intent is clear - the allocation of federal dollars through American Rescue Plan (ARP) was intended to support states in their efforts to keep essential government services operating safely for our constituents. Instead of using these funds as intended to take mitigation actions, your policies do the opposite. They undermine necessary public health protocols and punish schools for your failure to act. This plan is a clear attempt to dismantle public schools, not to protect students and school staff to keep schools open. Consequently, your actions will exacerbate this public health crisis and divert ARP funds from their intended purpose to be awarded as school vouchers.

You recently received a second letter from the US Treasury Office of Recovery Programs who found your programs ineligible for State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF) under ARP and stated concerns over your failure to benefit low-income families and students. The United States Treasury specifically demanded you to redirect funds to eligible uses or remediate issues with the program by “redesigning the programs to eliminate any elements that are inconsistent with the purpose and requirements of the SLFRF program, **“Failure to take either step within sixty (60) calendar days may result in Treasury initiating an action to recoup SLFRF funds used in violation of the eligible uses.”** Treasury also warned of the possibility of withholding future funds for Arizona if these issues are not adequately addressed within this timeframe. Mr. Ducey, your failure to support the health and safety of all Arizonans will be detrimental to our schools, students and communities.

We must do all that is necessary to protect children. It is unacceptable to solely place the burden of keeping our schools safely open for in-person learning and fighting COVID on our children, their families and the school staff serving them. Healthy teachers and school staff keep schools

open, yet Arizona schools are nearing critical staff shortages. The latest COVID-19 surge exacerbates an existing educator shortage in this state in which one of five vacancies remained unfilled as of October. This announcement is simply the latest blow to teachers already experiencing the lowest pay in the nation.

I respectfully urge you to comply with the Treasury Department request to remediate and redirect ARP funding to their eligible and intended purposes, and to discontinue the practices which disproportionately divert funds from protecting students and school staff. Thank you for your consideration of this urgent request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Raúl M. Grijalva". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress