



For Immediate Release

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NSTA APPLAUDS LAHOOD AND PANETTA FOR CERTS TAX EXEMPTION SUPPORT

As private school bus contractors throughout the country continue to rebound from the adverse financial effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, the National School Transportation Association (NSTA) applauds the efforts of Representatives Darin LaHood (IL-18) and Jim Panetta (CA-20) for their support of giving tax exempt status to grants provided through the Coronavirus Economic Relief for Transportation Services (CERTS) Program.

Private school bus operators provide nearly 40 percent of the nation's school bus service in nearly 200,000 yellow school buses and providing employment to almost 380,000 workers. Each day, almost 26 million children rely on the yellow bus as their primary way to get to school in the safest way possible.

Overall, the industry also suffered severe economic losses over the course of the pandemic, and CERTS Program grants provided desperately needed funding to private school bus contractors that has allowed the continuity of vital student transportation. However, unlike some previous Covid-19 relief programs (Paycheck Protection Program, Shuttered Venues Operators Grant, Restaurant Revitalization Fund), CERTS funds were not deemed tax exempt.

In addition to home-to-school service, school bus operators provided essential services to schools throughout the country during the 2020-21 School Year, and the CERTS Program help support those efforts. While the CERTS Act awarded vital funding, grants only covered about 20 percent of lost revenues. The surge of the Delta Variant has caused some of the issues faced previously to resurface, and it is now estimated that normal operations may not return until 2023.

Recipients of CERTS Grants are comprised of struggling businesses, and requiring them to pay taxes on emergency grant funding will only lengthen their recovery. It is imperative that Congress continues to provide economic assistance to these businesses, through the tax exemption of CERTS Grants.

NSTA applauds Reps. LaHood and Panetta for being the leading advocates for the tax exemption of CERTS funds. With their help, nearly 100 members of the House of Representatives have signed onto a letter to House Leadership and Ways and Means Committee in calling for the tax exemption of CERTS Grants.

"NSTA greatly appreciates the efforts of Representatives LaHood and Panetta on their support of private student transportation providers. Their leadership is critical as private operators continue to gain their footing during this turbulent recovery," said Carina Noble, NSTA President, and Senior Vice President Communications and External Affairs for National Express in Lisle, IL.



“Representatives LaHood and Panetta have been consistent leaders in providing initial impetus for the CERTS Act last year, and they continue to support transportation providers in advocating for this proposal. Private school bus operators are grateful for the support this measure has so far garnered on Capitol Hill, and we look forward to a successful outcome,” said Curt Macysyn, Executive Director of NSTA.

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About NSTA: National School Transportation Association has been the voice of private school bus contractors, manufacturers and suppliers since 1964. The association provides school transportation professionals with the tools and resources they need to make school buses safe, affordable, and efficient nationwide.