



CONGRESS OF THE FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA

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COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 24-12

RE: PRESIDENTIAL COMMUNICATION NO. 23-573

SUBJECT: FISCAL YEAR 2026 BUDGET/EDUCATION

MAY 29, 2025

The Honorable Esmond B. Moses  
Speaker, Twenty-Fourth Congress  
Federated States of Micronesia  
First Regular Session, 2025

Dear Mr. Speaker:

Your Committee on Education, to which was jointly referred Presidential Communication 23-573 regarding the National Government's Recommended FY 2026 Budget, begs leave to report as follows:

Presidential Communication No. 23-573 was transmitted to Congress with the *National Government Fiscal Year 2026 Recommended Budget* ("Budget Book"). Pursuant to Rule 7, Section 3(b), of the Official Rules of Procedure of the Twenty-Fourth Congress of the Federated States of Micronesia, your Committee has limited its review to those portions of the recommended budget relating to matters under its jurisdiction. These are:

- A. National Department of Education
  - 1. Office of the Secretary
  - 2. Division of Formal and Non-Formal Education
  - 3. Division of Quality and Effectiveness
- B. COM Board of Regents
- C. Grants, Subsidies and Contributions
  - 1. National Department of Education
    - a. Aid to Non Public Schools
    - b. National Scholarship Fund
    - c. National Close-Up Program

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- d. National Merit Scholarship
- e. Financial Assistance/FSM Students at CMI
- f. Financial Assistance/FSM Students at PCC
- g. Aid to Students in Japan
- h. Aid for FSM Students in China
- i. Aid for FSM Students in Fiji
- j. Caroline College & Pastoral Institute (CCP)
- k. Faithwalk Christian College
- l. Xavier High School
- 2. Resources
  - a. COM Board Meeting
  - b. COM Treaty Obligations
- D. Capital Investment and Human Resource Development (CIP)
  - 1. College of Micronesia -FSM
    - a. College of Micronesia-FSM Operations
    - b. FSM Fisheries and Maritime Institution
    - c. COM-FSM Public Health Initiative (DDFT)
    - d. COM-FSM IDP Infrastructure Facility Plan
    - e. COM-FSM Endowment Fund
  - 2. National Department of Education
    - a. School Accreditation
    - b. Curriculum Minimum Standards Program
    - c. NDOE Program Matching
    - d. CELEP (Special Education)
    - e. Teacher Certification Project
    - f. Development of National School Leadership Standards
    - g. Training of out-of-school youth in FSM
    - h. NMCT
    - i. Vernacular Language Arts Curriculum and Standards
    - j. FSM Math Curriculum Revision

The Committee notes that there are inaccuracies in the President's Budget Book for FY 2026, and it will analyze each instance in the relevant category below.

This report, and all previous and subsequent reports of your Committee, should be treated as reflecting the policies of the Federated States of Micronesia, as defined by Congress. It is the intent of your Committee that any commentary found in this

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report should be treated as policy for the guidance of the departments, agencies and entities.

Your Committee on Education held public hearings on May 19, 20, and 22, 2025, with the National Department of Education and the College of Micronesia-FSM. Present at the hearing for the National Department of Education were the Acting Secretary and key staff from all the relevant divisions, representatives from the Department of Justice, the Office of the President, the Department of Finance and Administration and the Office of Personnel. At the hearing for the College of Micronesia-FSM the President of the College, her key staff and members of the COM-FSM Board of Regents were present.

#### **1. NATIONAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

The President's recommended budget for FY 2026 for the National Department of Education is \$1,436,877, the recommended funding sources for this Department are \$881,466 from Domestic Revenue and \$555,411 from Compact Education Sector Grant. Additional programs under the National Department of Education's jurisdiction are funded by U.S. federal grants in the amount of \$1,276,377 have a separate budget evaluation and appropriation process, and will be discussed in this report only in the context of how changes in their funding may impact the overall structure and function of the National Department of Education.

The National Department of Education is also recommended by the President to receive funding under the section for Grants, Subsidies and Contributions for FY 2026 at \$3,705,000, the recommended funding sources are: \$1,000,000 from Compact Sector Education Grant, and \$2,705,000 from Domestic Revenue. The National Department of Education also is recommended to receive funding under the section for Capital Investment and Human Resource Development for FY 2026 in the amount of \$1,683,362, the recommended funding sources are \$546,044 from Compact Education Sector Grant and \$1,137,318 from Domestic Revenue.

The President has recommended a budget for the College of Micronesia-FSM under the section for Capital Investment and

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Human Resource Development for FY 2026 at \$6,873,901, the recommended funding sources are \$4,018,539 from Compact Education Sector Grant, \$1,941,665 from the Compact Infrastructure Sector Grant and \$913,697 from Domestic Revenue.

**A. Office of the Secretary**

	FY25 Appropriated	FY26 Dept. Proposed	FY26 President Recommends	FY26 Committee Recommends	Domestic Revenue	Compact Sector Grant
Personnel	172,660*	227,153	227,153	172,660	172,660	-0-
Travel	78,000	89,200	89,200	89,200	79,200	10,000
Contract	190,000	90,000	90,000	90,000	90,000	-0-
OCE	96,616	57,500	57,500	57,500	57,500	-0-
Fixed Asset	0	50,000	50,000	-0-	-0-	-0-
Total	537,276	513,853	513,853	409,360	399,360	10,000
# Employees	5	6	6	5	5	-0-

- Historical personnel category is incorrect. The correct number is \$172,660.

**Personnel:**

The witnesses confirmed that no increase in salaries and no new positions is the budget guidance for FY 2026, but also stated that exceptions were made in certain situations. The Budget Book includes a recommendation for a new position. The Committee is disappointed that policy and guidance for this coming fiscal year is not more definite. In a budget climate where difficult choices must be made the Committee would like to conduct its work with the knowledge that its decisions are fair and in keeping with a national planning framework. Absent detailed policy guidance the Committee is taking a conservation approach to the budget for the next fiscal year. It does not recommend salary increases or new positions at this time.

The Committee is pleased that the salary information in the Budget Book is correct for the five current positions. These

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positions have been the same for several years and it confirmed the activities will remain the same in FY 2026.

In accordance with the above commentary, **your Committee recommends \$172,660 for the Personnel of the Office of the Secretary for FY 2026, to be funded in its entirety from Domestic Revenue.**

**Travel:**

There is a recommended increase in this category from \$78,000 this fiscal year to \$89,200 for FY 2026. It was explained by the witnesses, and is clear in the Budget Book this increase is due to increases in the trip expenses for the JEMCO annual and mid-year meetings. As this trip is necessary for the Compact grant evaluation process it is one of the few exceptions where your Committee will entertain a funding increase. This increase in trip cost is also supported by the small amount of Compact Education Sector Grant funding recommended for this category at \$10,000.

In consideration of the above, **your Committee recommends \$89,200 for FY 2026 for Travel for the Office of the Secretary, to be funded at \$79,200 from Domestic Revenue and \$10,000 from Compact Education Sector Grant.**

**Contractual Services:**

The Committee notes that for all departments of the Executive the budgets for operations at the Executive branch have been recommended for reduction in the coming fiscal year, and in some cases marked for significant decreases. As a general note this Committee does not believe that these across-the-board reductions are realistic given the price increases for utilities and supplies. It voiced this concern to the witnesses during the budget hearing. The Acting Secretary for the National Department of Education stated that he was confident that the President's recommendations in the categories of Contractual Services and Other Current Expenditures would be adequate for the next fiscal year. It is not the Committee's responsibility

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to advocate for an increase in budget, however reasonable, particularly at this time and defers to the President and the National Department of Education.

For the reasons stated above, your Committee recommends \$90,000 for the Contractual Services for the Office of the Secretary for FY 2026, to be funded in its entirety from Domestic Revenue.

**Other Current Expenditures:**

The category for Other Current Expenditures is also recommended for a significant decrease in funding, approximately forty percent for the coming fiscal year. As stated in the previous section, your Committee has misgivings regarding the wisdom of these recommended reductions but defers to the President and National Department of Education who have put this budget forward.

In consideration of the above, your Committee recommends \$57,500 for the Other Current Expenditures for the Office of the Secretary for FY 2026, to be funded in its entirety from Domestic Revenue.

**Fixed Assets:**

In this fiscal year no funding for Fixed Assets was appropriated. In the coming FY 2026 \$50,000 has been recommended by the President for a vehicle. Your Committee strongly urges fiscal restraint and does not recommend funding for vehicles at this time.

In accordance with the above commentary, your Committee recommends -0- funding for Fixed Assets for the Office of the Secretary for FY 2026.

After the above adjustments for each category, your Committee recommends \$409,360 for the total budget of the Office of the Secretary for FY 2026, with \$399,360 from Domestic Revenue and \$10,000 from Compact Education Sector Grant.

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**B. Division of Formal & Non Formal Education**

	FY25 Appropriated	FY26 Dept. Proposed	FY26 President Recommends	FY26 Committee Recommends
Personnel	207,416	207,416	207,416	207,934*
Travel	57,500	152,500	50,791	50,791
Contract	40,000	35,069	40,000	40,000
OCE	47,705	91,205	47,705	47,705
Fixed Assets	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-
Total	352,621	486,190	345,912	346,430
Employees	7	7	7	7

**Personnel:**

The witnesses confirmed that no new positions are being requested. This fiscal year an administrative staff was transferred from the Office of the Secretary. The Committee is adjusting the salaries in this category based on the most current information from the Office of Personnel showing two positions at a very slightly higher than listed in the Budget Book. The Committee is satisfied with the brief overview of activities given by the Acting Secretary, and will conduct a separate detailed oversight with the National Department of Education in the near future.

In accordance with the above statement, **your Committee recommends \$207,934 for Personnel for the Division of Formal & Non Formal Education for FY 2026, to be funded in its entirety from Domestic Revenue.**

**Travel:**

The Assistant Secretary of Budget from the Department of Finance and Administration confirmed that domestic travel was the priority for all divisions and that this category's budget was recommended to be slightly cut given that guidance. The Acting Secretary for the National Department of Education stated that he well understood the budgetary constraints and that the

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recommended budget would be adequate for the necessary trips in the coming fiscal year.

With the above understanding, your Committee recommends \$50,791 for Travel for the Division of Formal & Non Formal Education for FY 2026, to be funded in its entirety from Domestic Revenue.

**Contractual Services:**

All witnesses confirmed that the contractual services for this Division are recommended to stay the same as this fiscal year as is the recommended funding level. The Committee is satisfied with this as a reasonable assessment of operations costs.

In accordance with the above statement, your Committee recommends \$40,000 for Contractual Services for the Division of Formal & Non Formal Education for FY 2026, to be funded in its entirety from Domestic Revenue.

**Other Current Expenditures:**

The President recommends that operating costs remain the same for this Division as in the current fiscal year. Again, the Committee welcomes this as a correct evaluation of the costs of operations.

In accordance with the above analysis, your Committee recommends \$47,705 for the Other Current Expenditures for the Division of Formal & Non Formal Education for FY 2026, to be funded in its entirety from Domestic Revenue.

**Fixed Assets:**

No funding was recommended for Fixed Assets for FY 2026 by the President, and your Committee concurs.

Your Committee recommends a slight reduction in total funding for the Division of Formal & Non Formal Education in FY 2026 at \$346,430, to be funded from Domestic Revenue in its entirety.

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**C. Division of Quality & Effectiveness**

	FY25 Appropriated	FY26 Dept. Proposed	FY26 President Recom.	FY26 Committee Recom.	Domestic Revenue	Compact Sector Grant
Personnel	225,992	296,365	234,242	225,922	-0-	225,922
Travel	119,500	330,267	119,500	119,500	-0-	119,500
Contract	150,000	349,750	150,000	150,000		150,000
OCE	45,300	59,988	64,372	64,372	14,383	49,989
Fixed Assets	44,000	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-
Total	584,722	1,036,370	568,114	559,794	14,383	545,411
Employees	9	9	9	9	-0-	9

**Personnel:**

In discussions during the public hearing on the budget for the National Department of Education its Acting Secretary stated that an additional IT staff was necessary for the Division of Quality & Effectiveness. It was confirmed that two IT staff are already in this Division and are included in the Budget Book. Justification and precise title/salary for the new position were requested during the hearing. The discussions at the time of the public hearing were inconclusive and no additional information was received from the Department or other witnesses. Your Committee supports all efforts to effectively support teachers and students across the Nation and should the necessity for this position be presented more clearly by the September session of Congress it may entertain it at that time. However, due to scheduling deadlines at the time of this report it cannot properly evaluate this request. Therefore, it is the decision of this Committee to adhere to the President's recommendation. For the reasons stated above, **your Committee recommends \$225,922 for Personnel for the Division of Quality & Effectiveness for FY 2026, to be funded in its entirety by Compact Education Sector Grant.**

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**Travel:**

The President's recommendation for Travel for the Division of Quality & Effectiveness is that funding should remain the same as this fiscal year at \$119,500 for FY 2026. The Committee confirmed that this category is proposed to be funded by Compact Education Sector Grant and that the trips proposed were the same as in previous years. Your Committee is satisfied that these trips are necessary for the operations of the Division and will benefit the National Department of Education as a whole.

In consideration of the above commentary, **your Committee recommends \$119,500 for Travel for the Division of Quality & Effectiveness for FY 2026, to be funded in its entirety by Compact Education Sector Grant.**

**Contractual Services:**

The category of Contractual Services is also recommended by the President to continue in FY 2026 with the same budget as the current fiscal year. While cuts have been made in other divisions your Committee is pleased that the operations funding reductions have not been recommended here.

As stated above the Committee concurs with the President's recommended budget, **and it recommends \$150,000 for FY 2026 for Contractual Services for the Division of Quality & Effectiveness, to be funded by Compact Education Sector Grant in its entirety.**

**Other Current Expenditures:**

The Committee confirmed that the requested increase in this category will benefit the National Department of Education as a whole. While the requested increase does not cancel out completely the reductions in the operations budgets of other divisions it will reduce the stress those reductions may cause. Your Committee approaches the National Department of Education budget as a whole and notes even with inclusion of this increase

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the total budget for the Department will be recommended at less than current fiscal year.

As stated above your Committee concurs with the President's recommendation to increase the budget in this category, and it recommends \$64,372 for Other Current Expenditures for the Division of Quality & Effectiveness for FY 2026, to be funded \$49,989 from Compact Education Sector Grant, and \$14,383 from Domestic Revenue.

Fixed Assets:

No funding was recommended for Fixed Assets for FY 2026 by the President, and your Committee concurs.

After the above adjustments for each category, your Committee recommends \$559,794 as the total budget of the Office of the Secretary for FY 2026, with \$14,383 from Domestic Revenue and \$545,411 from Compact Education Sector Grant.

2. Board of Regents – COM-FSM

The Committee notes with displeasure that the detailed budget breakdown for the Board of Regents for the College of Micronesia-FSM is not included in the President's Budget Book. In the brief summary that was included in the Budget Book the Board of Regents is recommended to be funded at \$120,000 for FY 2026, which is the same as in previous years. Your Committee is satisfied that this budget is justified, and notes that the Board of Regents witnesses were well prepared and informative at the recent budget hearings.

For the reasons stated above, your Committee recommends \$120,000 for funding for the College of Micronesia-FSM Board of Regents for FY 2026, to be sourced entirely from Domestic Revenue.

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**3. Grants, Subsidies and Contributions**

**A. National Department of Education**

	FY25 Appropriated	FY26 Dept. Recommended	FY26 Pres. Recommend	FY26 Committee Recommend
Non Public School	900,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000
National Scholarship	3,000,000	3,000,000	2,000,000	3,000,000*
Close-Up Program	75,000	75,000	75,000	75,000
Merit Scholarship	275,000	200,000	200,000	200,000
Aid CMI students	30,000	40,000	40,000	40,000
Aid PCC students	50,000	40,000	40,000	40,000
Aid Japan students	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000
Aid China students	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000
Aid Fiji students	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000
Aid Caroline College	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000
Aid Faithwalk College	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000
Xavier High School	50,000	-0-	-0-	-0-
Total	4,840,000	3,705,000	3,705,000	4,705,000

- The National Scholarship is recommended by the Committee at \$3,000,000, with \$2,000,000 to be funded from Domestic Revenue and \$1,000,000 from Compact Education Sector Grant.

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Your Committee appreciates the information provided regarding our students pursuing higher education. It understands that the cost of living and school fees have increased over the past fiscal year. The Committee was not satisfied with the President's recommended budget for FY 2026 National Scholarship. The National Scholarship was recommended to be reduced and the Committee was advised that if the National Scholarship is reduced not all eligible students will get an award. Our deserving students should be supported. This Nation needs skilled, educated and hard working young people coming up in the next generation who are able to lead this Nation.

Your Committee strongly urges maintaining the National Scholarship amount and breaks with the President's recommended budget for this category, **it therefore recommends \$4,705,000 for FY 2026 for Grants, Subsidies and Contributions for the National Department of Education, with \$3,705,000 to be sourced from Domestic Revenue and \$1,000,000 from Compact Education Sector Grant.**

#### **B. Resources**

##### **i. College of Micronesia-FSM Annual Board Meeting**

This annual board meeting is necessary for the College of Micronesia-FSM, and has remained budget at \$5,000 for many years. Your Committee is satisfied with this budget recommendation.

The Committee concurs with the President's recommendation, **and it recommends \$5,000 for FY 2026 for the College of Micronesia-FSM Board Meeting, to be funded in its entirety from Domestic Revenue.**

##### **ii. College of Micronesia-FSM Treaty Obligations**

This regional agreement for the institutions of higher education is very important for our college and the fees have remained the same for many years. Your Committee is satisfied with this budget.

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The Committee concurs with the President's recommendation, and it recommends \$25,000 for FY 2026 for the College of Micronesia-FSM Treaty Obligations, to be funded in its entirety from Domestic Revenue.

4. Capital Investment and Human Resource Development

	FY25 Appropriated	FY26 Dept. Proposed	FY26 President Recommended	FY26 Committee Recommended
COM operations	4,018,539	7,305,736	4,018,439	4,018,539* Ed Sector Grant
FMI	850,000	997,697	163,697	850,000
COM Public Health Project	250,000	250,000	250,000	250,000
COM IDP for Infrastructure	-0-	4,388,000	1,941,665	1,941,655** Infra. Grant
COM-FSM Endowment	-0-	500,000	500,000	-0-
School Accreditation	863,200	271,392	271,392	271,392* Ed Sector Grant
Curriculum Standards	968,477	-0-	-0-	-0-
NDOE Matching Program	60,000	-0-	-0-	-0-
CELEP	42,550	42,550	42,550	42,550
Teacher Certification	-0-	291,420	291,420	274,652* Ed. Sector Grant
Leadership Standards	-0-	290,000	290,000	290,000
Training out of school youth	-0-	496,000	-0-	-0-

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NMCT	-0-	442,000	442,000	442,000
Project Current	-0-	60,000	-0-	-0-
Vernacular Language Arts	-0-	66,000	66,000	66,000
FSM Math Curriculum	-0-	280,000	280,000	280,000
Total	7,010,216	15,680,795	8,557,263	8,716,698

\*Education Sector Grant is recommended for three line items totaling \$4,564,583.

\*\* Infrastructure Sector Grant is recommended for COM IDP at \$1,941,655.

Your Committee has had very productive public hearings with the College of Micronesia-FSM regarding their activities during the past fiscal year and their needs for FY 2026. Student enrollment has declined slightly during the past several years. In an effort to attract more students and better serve the community the College has decided to go to a system of open admissions while using the current entrance exam as a placement tool. This will allow students at lower levels to be admitted and to be immediately placed with tutors and support staff. Faculty positions who would support this new model need to be recruited.

Recruitment of qualified faculty is a college wide issue as the salaries of instructors are the lowest in the region. The College is part of the additional funding requested is to raise the salaries. The College witnesses stated that retention of long serving staff has also become an issue.

Major renovations must also be done to some of the older buildings. Also, the maintenance and support for the new buildings coming on-line needs to be supported in the coming year. Extensive discussion was had regarding the repairs of the FMI campus.

The President of the College of Micronesia-FSM stated that the proposed \$3 million in Domestic Revenue would support these

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additional needs and that this was critical for the College as the next round of accreditation evaluations which will be done in 2027. The right level of resources and student support will be a major area for evaluation.

The Committee makes every effort to be supportive of the College, however, in a budget climate where increments of a thousand dollars are being scrutinized it cannot entertain increases in the millions. Your Committee was very pleased with the level of Compact Education Sector Grant funding that has been approved for this current fiscal year. As so many funding needs exist at the national level it has taken decision that this will be the only operations funding recommended at this time.

Your Committee does make an exception for the funding of FMI in FY 2026. From the public hearing the Committee understands that the President's much reduced recommendation for FMI is based on the assumption other funding is available for FMI next fiscal year. There is no additional funding available for FMI for FY26. The Committee, therefore, recommends funding be restored to FMI at the current fiscal year levels.

As no funding was appropriated in the current fiscal year for the College Endowment Fund, the Committee does not entertain a funding request for FY 2026.

Your Committee has reviewed the IDP infrastructure proposal for the College. This proposal will add a needed student center to the National Campus of the College of Micronesia-FSM.

The Committee is satisfied with the National Department of Education proposals for its core projects. Budgets including activities for these projects are attached for further review.

The Committee has carefully reviewed the above projects and funding requests, and in accordance with its above commentary, **it recommends \$8,716,698 in funding under Capital Investment and Human Resource Development for the National Department of Education and the College of Micronesia-FSM for FY 2026,**

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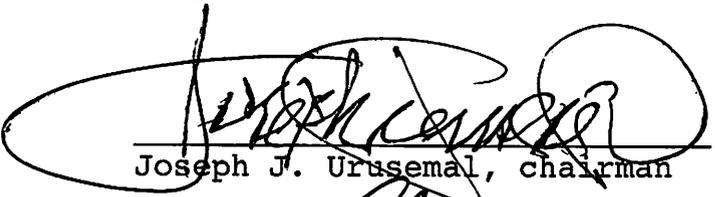
**\$6,606,238 from Domestic Revenue, \$4,564,238 from Compact Education Sector Grant, and \$1,941,655 from Compact Infrastructure Grant.**

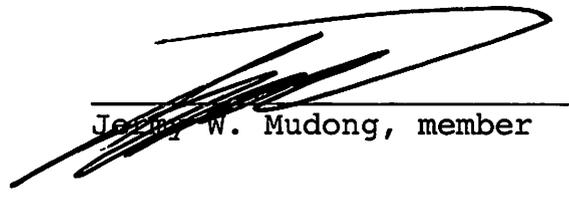
**CONCLUSION**

Your Committee on Education has carefully reviewed the President's Recommended FY 2026 budget and all of the supplemental information provided by the Executive and the entities within your Committee's jurisdiction. The recommended sums set forth reflect your Committee's recommendations on the level of funding for the designated activity, program or project for all of Fiscal Year 2026.

Subject to the conditions and limitations set forth herein, and subject to the concurrence of your Committee on Ways and Means, your Committee on Education recommends approval of the amounts and source of funds identified as Committee Recommendations.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Joseph J. Urusemal, chairman

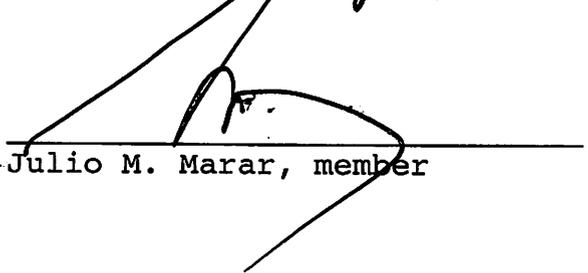
  
Jeremy W. Mudong, member

  
Esmond B. Moses, member

Perpetua S. Konman, member

  
Merlynn Abello-Alfonso, member

  
Yoslyn G. Sigrah, member

  
Julio M. Marar, member