



SUPPORTING SOUTH DAKOTA STUDENTS

As a parent and a grandparent, Sen. Thune understands that parents, teachers, and local school boards, not bureaucrats in Washington, are best positioned to make decisions about kids' education.

Highlights of Sen. Thune's Advocacy for the Federally Impacted School Districts:

Continues to advocate for federally impacted schools through Impact Aid

- Sen. Thune led efforts to ensure school districts participating in the Impact Aid program received stable federal payments for their federally connected students throughout the COVID pandemic. Due to COVID, many school districts experienced temporary enrollment declines. Therefore, in an effort to ensure these students did not receive reduced Impact Aid payments due to the pandemic, Sen. Thune authored legislation, which was signed into law in both [2020](#) and [2022](#), that ensured these school districts maintained stable funding to get them through the pandemic.

Highlights of Sen. Thune's Efforts to Educate Students Entering South Dakota's Workforce:

Continues to push proposals to train students for in-demand industries

- Sen. Thune introduced [legislation](#) that would expand apprenticeship offerings in South Dakota and across the nation. The Training America's Workforce Act would establish a process for the U.S. Department of Labor to approve industry-recognized apprenticeship programs. It would allow the private sector, in conjunction with colleges and tech schools, to develop their own apprenticeship programs that are also recognized by the federal government to fill the unique needs of employers while also diversifying the industries that have apprenticeship opportunities available for students, which allows students to earn while they learn.

Highlights of Sen. Thune's Commitment to Helping Individuals Reduce Student Loan Debt:

Enacted legislation allowing employers to offer employees tax-free student loan assistance

- Sen. Thune had [legislation](#) enacted into law in 2020 that allows employers to make tax-free contributions, up to \$5,250 per year, on their employees' student loans. This provides employers with an additional tool to attract and retain workers during this tight labor market, while providing employees with assistance in reducing their debt obligations.