

Bills May Assist Teachers Who Spend Cash Out Of Pocket

News

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It happens far too frequently to educators across the country. They spend their own, hard-earned money on classroom expenses and, at tax time, the IRS only allows them to deduct a portion of the amount they shelled out.



However, several bills now making the rounds in Congress would allow educators to deduct more of the money they pay out-of-pocket for classroom expenses. One such bill, the Tax Relief for Educators Act, is sponsored by Rep. Dina Titus (D-Nevada).

“Never before have our nation’s teachers been asked to do so much with so little,” said Titus in a letter to members of the U.S. House of Representatives. “With education budgets stretched thin and schools cutting back on supplies, teachers and other education professionals often pay out-of-pocket for materials and resources they use to enhance the classroom while educating our students.”

Titus’ bill would double the current \$250 deduction, which now only applies to K-12 teachers, to \$500. It would also extend the deduction to cover the out-of-pocket classroom expenses of principals, aides, and early childhood teachers and make the educator tax deduction a permanent part of federal tax code.

“Our members consistently dig deeper into their pockets to buy materials and supplies needed to get the job done,” said Nevada State Education Association President Lynne Warne. “Doubling the IRS deduction will be very helpful to our teachers and support professionals who spend their day in the classrooms.”

Studies show that teachers are spending more of their own funds each year to supply their classrooms and purchase essential items such as pencils, glue, scissors and facial tissues. According to the National School Supply and Equipment Association, educators’ out of pocket expenses for the 2005-2006 school year, on average, totaled nearly \$2000, including \$826 for classroom supplies and \$926 for instructional materials.

A similar proposal to Titus’ bill has been introduced by other lawmakers in the House, including Rep. Suzanne Kosmas (D-Florida). Meanwhile, Rep. Larry Kissell (D-North Carolina) has introduced a bill that would extend the current \$250 deduction through 2011. Several members of the Senate have also introduced bills related to the educator tax deduction.