Dear ,

I am writing to urge you to support HR5361, “The Public Building Renewal Act of 2016,” a bill that Congressman Mike Kelly (R-PA) recently introduced to spur private investment in public building infrastructure. Public-private partnerships (PPPS) have been critical as a means of delivering projects on time, on budget, and with greater value to taxpayers over the long-term.

PPP projects such as the Port of Miami Tunnel, the PA Rapid Bridge Replacement Program, the Ohio River Bridges, the Goethals Bridge, and FL I-4 have not only saved billions but have moved forward much faster thanks to the PPP delivery approach.

The use of PPPs to deliver public buildings is extremely limited because unlike the transportation sector, public buildings are not eligible for exempt facility bonds. This inhibits public building PPPs from combining tax exempt financing with private financing, resulting in an increased cost of financing.

Throughout the country, the average public school building is at least 40 years old and the current backlog of maintenance and capital projects adds up to a $45 billion funding gap annually. That means thousands of U.S. children are attending deteriorating public schools where asbestos, moldy walls, falling ceiling tiles, lead paint, broken toilets, pesticides, leaking roofs, and poor ventilation have become the norm.

Over the past 6 years, performance based PPPs have facilitated $20 billion in innovative transportation projects, creating thousands of US jobs. PPP projects have also delivered states billions in savings, while significantly accelerating projects. But, every U.S. PPP transportation project undertaken has utilized either TIFIA or Exempt Facility Bonds or both.

Given the success of PPPs in the U.S. transportation sector and in delivering public buildings globally, the use of PPPs should be expanded to improve our schools.

If passed, HR 5361 would play an instrumental role in catalyzing the use of private investment to rebuild our nation’s dilapidated public buildings. This bill has garnered significant bipartisan support with 11 co-sponsors, including six Republicans and five Democrats. In addition, it has an incredibly low score of $48 million over ten years from the Joint Committee on Taxation.

As a member of the Senate Finance Committee your leadership on this issue would have significant influence. Further, given Florida’s active participation in PPP projects this should be an easy issue for you to get behind.

HR 5361 will have an instrumental impact in catalyzing the use of private investment to rebuild our crumbling schools and dilapidated public buildings. We look forward to your support in the Senate behind a companion bill to HR 5361.

Thanks for your help in ensuring brighter, healthier, and safer futures for our children.

Sincerely,