

The GOP Doesn't Care that Teachers Buy Their Own Classroom Supplies

By [Shawnta S. Barnes](#) – November 9, 2019



We give our blood, our sweat and our tears. We sacrifice time we should be spending with family and friends. We spend money from our salaries, which aren't up to par with other professionals with four year degrees, to buy supplies for our classrooms and now the GOP wants to eliminate a benefit that helps us with that cost.

The educator expense deduction allows teachers and administrators to deduct \$250 on their taxes for out-of-pocket expenses for classroom items or professional development. The National School Supply and Equipment Association (NSSEA) and Scholastic recently released studies showing educators are spending hundreds of their hard earned money each year to supply basic necessities to ensure students can learn. Republicans stated they want to eliminate this deduction to simplify the tax system, but how does this help students who attend resource strapped schools?

Each school has its own needs. When I worked in one urban school, most of my students had supplies and the school was able to provide additional supplies I needed, so I did not buy much. When I switched to another school, 15 minutes away, I was in for a rude awakening. I remember going to the office and asking for the supply form to request some paper, pencils and folders for students to track their own data as I did at my previous school. The school secretary responded by laughing and then said, "Poor thing, I know you are serious. But if the students don't bring it, we don't have money to buy it." That school year, I spent my money on class novel sets, data folders, pencils, markers, etc. just to get through the year. I also went online to DonorsChoose.org to obtain additional novels.

Teachers should not have to panhandle on the street, create Go Fund Me or Donors Choose campaigns to get supplies and resources. Why take away this tax credit when we know teachers will still have to continue to go into their own pockets? Another benefit for teachers is being taken away without solutions being offered to solve the root cause of the problem. Will this be another reason teachers leave the profession? How are we going to stop the teacher shortage when we keep taking things away from teachers?