

**21ST SENATORIAL DISTRICT
SCOTT E. HUTCHINSON**

HARRISBURG OFFICE
SENATE BOX 203021
HARRISBURG, PA 17120-3021
(717) 787-9684
FAX (717) 787-6088
TTY (800) 364-1581

shutchinson@pasen.gov
senatorscotthutchinson.com



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January 23, 2025

The Honorable Glenn 'GT' Thompson
United States House of Representatives
400 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Thompson:

We are writing to express our strong support for your leadership in Congress as you work to secure the swift reauthorization of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act (SRS), which is essential to the schools and communities in our area. The Forest Service has stated that SRS reauthorization must be finalized by the end of January to keep the program on track and continue supporting impacted communities.

As you know, the Allegheny National Forest (ANF) plays a crucial role in our region. Forest County, which depends heavily on SRS funding, would be particularly affected by any interruption in the reauthorization of this program. The county had no choice but to rely on the more uncertain SRS funding after the 1908 Act 25 Percent Payments were significantly reduced. This reliance was necessary, as the school district and townships could not afford to depend on the declining 1908 Act funding, which would have forced a sharp increase in local taxes.

Given the current economic climate, combined with a 60% reduction in U.S. Forest Service payments, the consequences for the school district and several townships that depend on SRS funds would be devastating. Without reauthorization, these communities will face substantial tax increases, which would disproportionately affect residents, many of whom live on fixed incomes or are already struggling at or below the poverty level.

We understand that you are actively working to urge House leadership to pass SRS reauthorization legislation, and we sincerely appreciate your efforts. Please let us know if there is any way we can assist you in this crucial work.

Sincerely,



Scott E. Hutchinson
State Senator, 21st District



Kathy Rapp
State Representative, 65th District



Cris Dush
State Senator, 25th District



Mike Armanini
State Representative, 75th District



Martin Causer
State Representative, 67th District