

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 17, 2016

The Honorable Roy Blunt  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health, and  
Human Services, and Education  
Senate Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health, and  
Human Services, and Education  
Senate Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Blunt and Ranking Member Murray:

We write to request that as you weigh difficult budget choices and finalize the Fiscal Year 2017 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education appropriations bill, you provide the highest feasible funding for the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG), Head Start, Early Head Start, Preschool Development Grants, and early intervention services provided through Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part C (Grants for Infants and Families) and Part B (Preschool Grants). Together, these programs provide at-risk children with the early learning experiences that they need to succeed in school, work, and life and support low-income parents in their efforts to provide for their families.

Funding for early childhood education programs represents one of our greatest opportunities for a significant return on federal investments. Research has demonstrated that early childhood education is an effective strategy for improving the developmental outcomes and long-term success of children, especially low-income children. Renowned economists, including Nobel Laureate James Heckman and former Federal Reserve economist Art Rolnick, have demonstrated that high quality early education can produce up to \$16 in benefits for every \$1 spent. This substantial return on investment is derived largely from long-term savings associated with a reduced need for special education, improved health outcomes, higher rates of high school and college graduation, decreased dependence on welfare programs, and increased workforce productivity of children who receive a high-quality early education.

Despite the promise of substantial returns, federal early childhood programs reach only a fraction of eligible children and families. Families receive child care assistance for only one in six eligible children; less than half of eligible preschool-aged children are able to participate in Head Start; and fewer than five percent of eligible infants and toddlers receive Early Head Start services. In addition to improving access to these programs, federal funding also helps states that are working hard to improve the quality of their early childhood education systems.

Improving the long-term outcomes of our nation's most vulnerable children is crucial to the future health of our economy. Investing in high-quality early education is a proven strategy for achieving this goal and it is vital that all children are able to benefit from high quality-early education. We therefore ask that as you weigh difficult budget choices, you support robust funding for the Child Care and Development Block Grant, Head Start Early Head Start, and Preschool Development Grants so that children and families continue to have access to affordable, high-quality early education options and States can continue to work towards

improving the quality of their early childhood education systems. We also ask that you continue to support robust funding for Part C and Part B of IDEA, which supports critical early intervention services for infants and toddlers. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Al Franken  
United States Senator

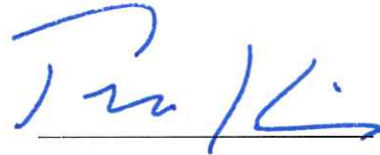


Robert P. Casey, Jr.  
United States Senator


Mazie K. Hirono  
United States Senator



Jeanne Shaheen  
United States Senator



Tim Kaine  
United States Senator



Brian Schatz  
United States Senator



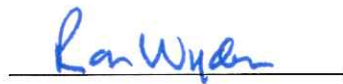
Sheldon Whitehouse  
United States Senator



Patrick J. Leahy  
United States Senator



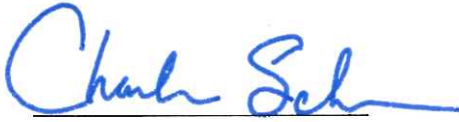
Bernard Sanders  
United States Senator



Ron Wyden  
United States Senator



Jack Reed  
United States Senator



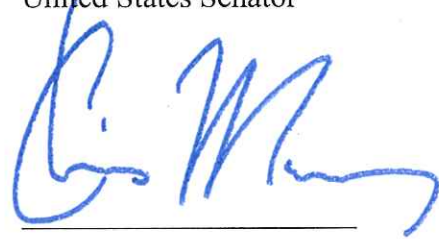
Charles E. Schumer  
United States Senator



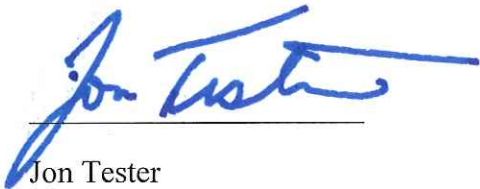
Sherrod Brown  
United States Senator



Debbie Stabenow  
United States Senator



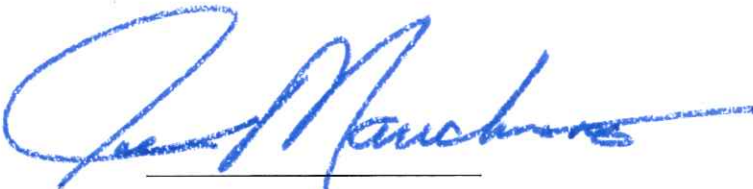
Christopher S. Murphy  
United States Senator



Jon Tester  
United States Senator



Martin Heinrich  
United States Senator



Joe Manchin III  
United States Senator



Kirsten Gillibrand  
United States Senator





Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senator



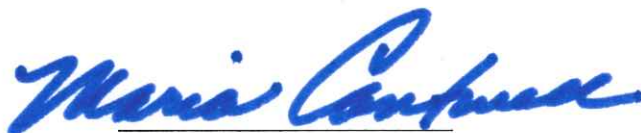
Barbara Boxer  
United States Senator



Richard J. Durbin  
United States Senator



Gary C. Peters  
United States Senator



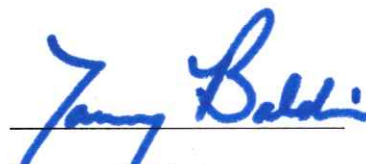
Maria Cantwell  
United States Senator



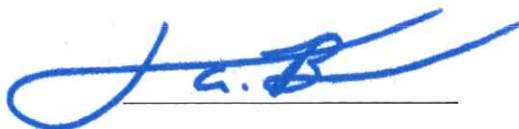
Christopher A. Coons  
United States Senator



Benjamin L. Cardin  
United States Senator



Tammy Baldwin  
United States Senator



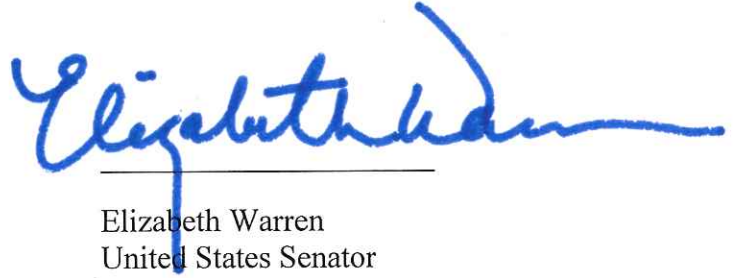
Cory A. Booker  
United States Senator



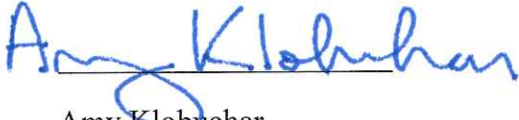
Robert Menendez  
United States Senator



Joe Donnelly  
United States Senator



Elizabeth Warren  
United States Senator



Amy Klobuchar  
United States Senator