

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 11, 2018

The Honorable Jerry Moran  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,  
Science, and Related Agencies  
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations  
Washington DC, 20510

The Honorable Jeanne Shaheen  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,  
Science, and Related Agencies  
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations  
Washington DC, 20510

Dear Chairman Moran and Ranking Member Shaheen:

As the committee begins to prepare the Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related appropriations bill for Fiscal Year 2019, we write to ask you to continue Congress's support for the NASA Office of Education.

We were pleased to review that the Fiscal Year 2018 Omnibus bill provided \$100 million of funding for the NASA Office of Education. As you know, the current administration has announced its support for public investment in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) education, including a recently signed memorandum to boost \$200 million in STEM funding in our nation's public schools. Given the administration's support for increasing pathways to STEM careers, we were disappointed to learn that the President's most recent budget proposes to eliminate funding for the NASA Office of Education in Fiscal Year 2019.

Our nation continues to experience changing economic and workforce related trends. As continued innovation opens up new opportunities and possibilities, emphasis on technical skills and prowess in STEM education can help to better position our future generation of students for evolving 21<sup>st</sup> Century careers. Through its creative programming, community engagement, and financial assistance for students, the NASA Office of Education serves as a dynamic and positive force for encouraging students from all backgrounds to learn about exciting opportunities in STEM disciplines.

NASA's Office of Education includes the Space Grant College and Fellowship Program (Space Grant), a competitive, state-federal partnership that functions through consortia in all 50 states, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia. With nearly 1,000 partner institutions, this program promotes wide-ranging aerospace and other NASA-relevant STEM education activities. For every dollar that NASA provides, Space Grant consortia contribute an equal or greater amount from non-federal sources to maximize STEM engagement with students nationwide. According to NASA program data, over 80% of participating students in a particular year successfully land a job in a STEM related industry, NASA Academia, or gain admission to a STEM graduate program. The structure of the space grant consortia model is effective in promoting state and local based programs that encourage STEM education within the context of unique and local communities.

Additionally, the NASA Office of Education supports the Minority University Research and Educational Project (MUREP), which provides financial assistance to the nation's Minority Serving Institutions through internships, scholarships, and fellowship grants and cooperative agreements. Additionally, financial assistance in the form of stipends, tuition offsets, and research experiences better enable underrepresented and underserved students to enter our STEM workforce. These opportunities and forms of assistance help to diversify and prepare our workforce for the careers of the future.

We recognize that that you face significant budgetary challenges, but we strongly urge you to support the NASA Office of Education because of how important its mission is to boosting the nation's workforce competitiveness. For Fiscal Years 2017 and 2018, Congress appropriated \$100 million in funding for the NASA Office of Education; this level of funding helps supports programs for students at every level from K-12 to community college and doctoral degree programs.

The Administration has demonstrated an interest in space exploration and recently announced that the United States should pursue another mission to the moon, meanwhile NASA is planning to launch a mission to Mars. As we seek to successfully explore the far reaching expanses of our universe, we should also strive to maintain a commitment to educating the next generation inside and outside of the classroom. We greatly appreciate your leadership and consideration of this request to maintain funding for the NASA's Office of Education. Thank you for your time and consideration in reviewing this request.

Sincerely,



Tim Kaine  
United States Senator



Mark R. Warner  
United States Senator



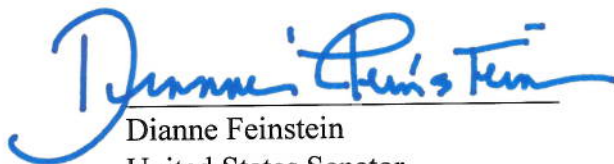
Ron Wyden  
United States Senator



Martin Heinrich  
United States Senator



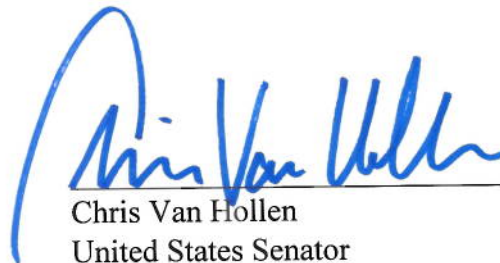
Benjamin L. Cardin  
United States Senator



Dianne Feinstein  
United States Senator



Sherrod Brown  
United States Senator



Chris Van Hollen  
United States Senator





Margaret Wood Hassan  
United States Senator



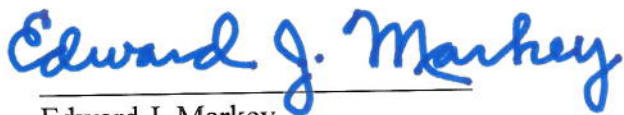
Joe Manchin III  
United States Senator



Mazie K. Hirono  
United States Senator



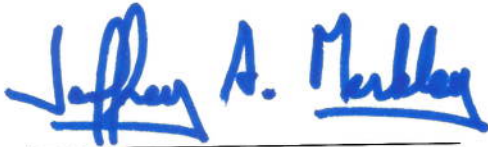
Maria Cantwell  
United States Senator



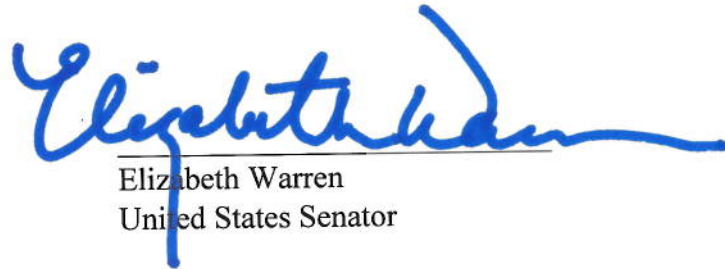
Edward J. Markey  
United States Senator



Jack Reed  
United States Senator



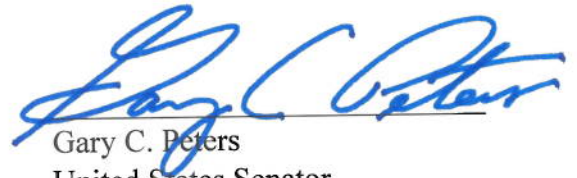
Jeffrey A. Merkley  
United States Senator



Elizabeth Warren  
United States Senator



Robert Menendez  
United States Senator



Gary C. Peters  
United States Senator



Catherine Cortez Masto  
United States Senator



Kirsten Gillibrand  
United States Senator



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Tom Udall  
United States Senator



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Bernard Sanders  
United States Senator



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Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senator



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Tammy Baldwin  
United States Senator