

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 25, 2017

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 request that as you weigh difficult budget choices for the Fiscal Year 2018 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. Five out of six children who are eligible for federal child care assistance do not receive it. This means that too many parents are unable to go to work knowing their children are in a safe and supportive setting. In more than half the states, child care is more expensive than a year's tuition to college, which only exacerbates this disparity. 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,




Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator

Al Franken
United States Senator


Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator




Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator



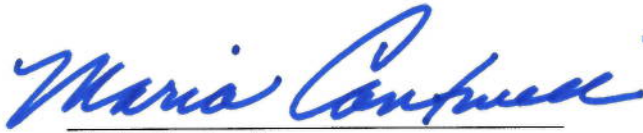
Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



Cory A. Booker
United States Senator



Sherrod Brown
United States Senator



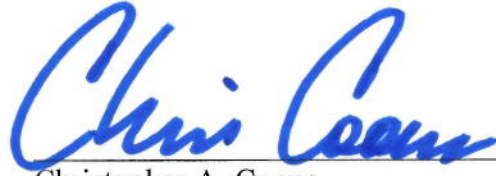
Maria Cantwell
United States Senator



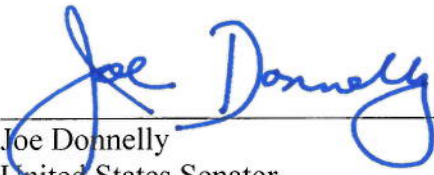
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United States Senator



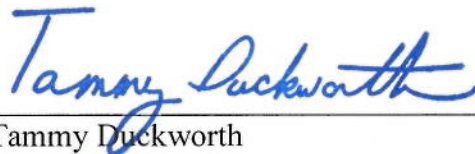
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Tammy Duckworth
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Richard J. Durbin
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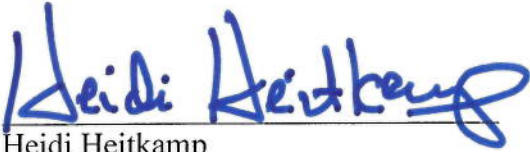
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United States Senator



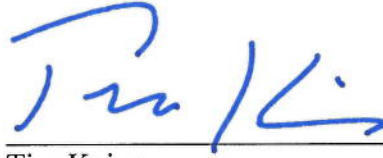
Margaret Wood Hassan
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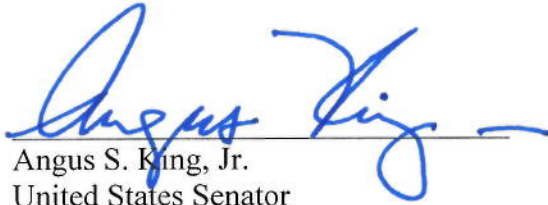
Martin Heinrich
United States Senator



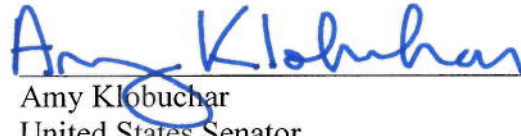
Heidi Heitkamp
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Tim Kaine
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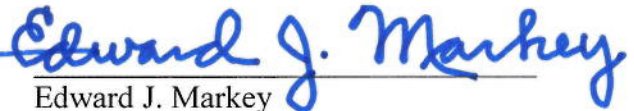
Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator



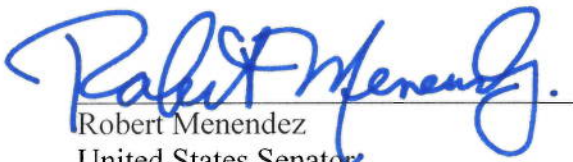
Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



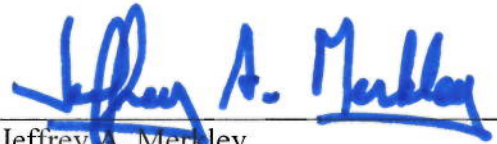
Joe Manchin, III
United States Senator



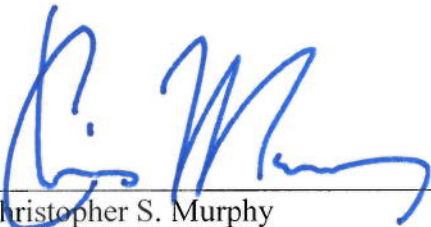
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United States Senator



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Jack Reed
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Bernard Sanders
United States Senator



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United States Senator



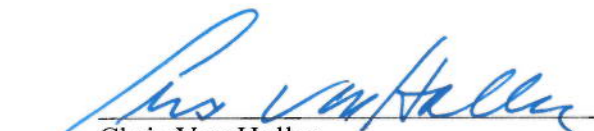
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Chris Van Hollen
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Elizabeth Warren
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Sheldon Whitehouse
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