

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April, 26, 2013

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

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

Dear Chairman Harkin and Ranking Member Moran:

We write to request that as you finalize the Fiscal Year 2014 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education appropriations bill you provide the highest feasible increase in funding for the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG), Head Start and Early Head Start programs. In addition, we urge you to continue supporting the Early Learning Challenge Fund as part of the Race to the Top program to assist states in their efforts to develop and sustain effective early learning systems. We also ask that you continue supporting funding for early intervention services provided through Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (Grants for Infants and Families). Together, these programs provide at-risk children with the early learning experiences they need to succeed in school, work, and life and support low-income parents in their efforts to provide for their families. Finally, we ask that you provide funding for a new federal-state partnership program to assist states in implementing high-quality preschool programs.

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 childcare assistance for only one in six eligible children, less than half of eligible preschool-aged children are able to participate in Head Start, and only four percent of eligible infants and toddlers receive Early Head Start services. In addition to improving access to these programs, federal funding also helps states who are working hard to improve the quality of their early childhood education systems. The Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Fund has been instrumental in that effort for many states.

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. We therefore ask you to support robust funding for the Child Care and Development Block Grant, Head Start, and Early Head Start as well as the Early Learning Challenge Fund to ensure that children and families continue to have access to affordable early care and education options and States can continue to work towards improving the quality of their early childhood education systems so that all children are able to reap the benefits of a high-quality early education. We also ask that you continue to support robust funding for Part C of IDEA, which supports critical early intervention services for infants and toddlers. Finally, we ask that you fund a new the federal-state partnership program to help increase the number of children who receive high-quality preschool instruction. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



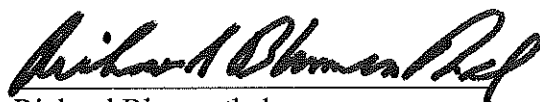
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United States Senator



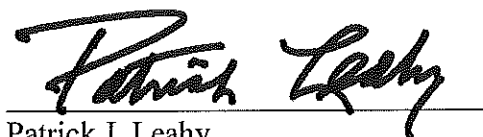
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Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator



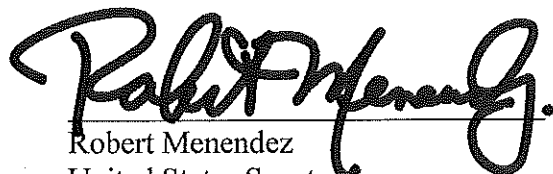
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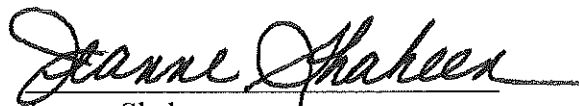
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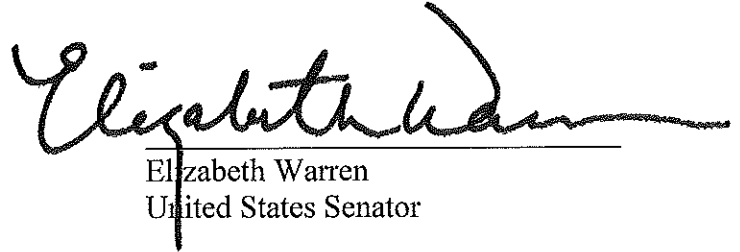
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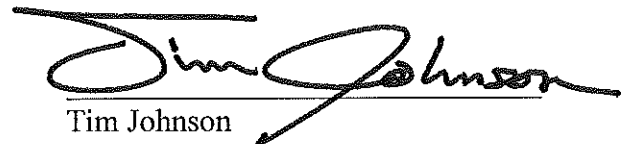
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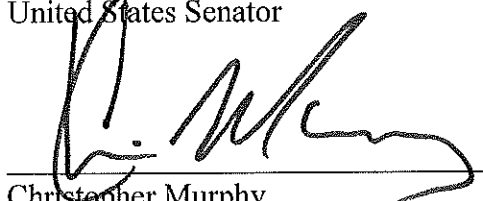
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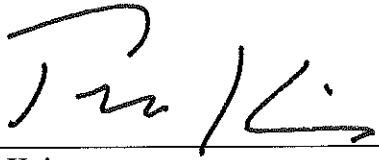
Brian Schatz
United States Senator



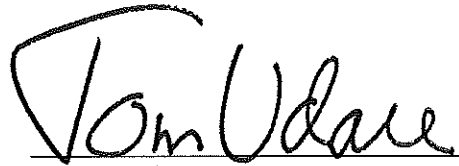
Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



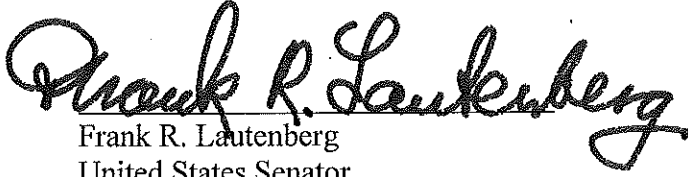
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