

November 5, 2013

Senator Patty Murray

Chairman, Senate Budget Committee
624 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington DC 20510

Representative Paul Ryan

Chairman, House Budget Committee
207 Cannon House Office Building
Washington DC 20515

Senator Jeff Sessions

Ranking Member, Senate Budget Committee
624 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington DC 20515

Representative Chris Van Hollen

Ranking Member, House Budget Committee
B-71 Cannon House Office Building
Washington DC 20515

Dear Chairman Murray, Chairman Ryan, Ranking Member Sessions and Ranking Member Van Hollen:

As business leaders from across the country, we urge you to make early investments in human capital development that drives greater economic productivity and strength for our nation. The Budget Conference Committee should seek to close our budget deficit, while making greater investments in closing the deficit in skills that is weakening America's workforce and economic competitiveness. Both these goals can be accomplished by making substantial investments in high quality early childhood education for disadvantaged children from birth to five.

Our businesses, and our nation as a whole, face a lack of skilled workers, a shrinking middle class, and diminishing buying power among consumers in housing, durable goods, products and services that have traditionally driven our economy. A strong, sustainable economy hinges on a workforce that is knowledgeable, smart, persistent, and capable of working in teams to solve complex problems, earning higher wages, and moving their families ahead through opportunity and enterprise. That is why we cannot close our budget deficit until we close our skills deficit.

Research shows that the skills deficit emerges as early as 18 months, widens throughout the early years, and is difficult and expensive to close. Simply put, early skills are the essential foundation for later success. Fortunately, developmental science and economics point us to an effective and cost-efficient solution: quality early childhood programs for disadvantaged children from birth to age five. They more than pay for themselves in better education, health, social, and economic outcomes. Just as importantly, they impart the skills that are essential for building our future workforce, reducing costly social spending and producing our way out of our budget deficits.

Investing in early childhood education is a practical, not partisan issue. Across the nation, Republican and Democratic governors are employing early childhood education as a solution for greater achievement, less crime and social dependency and more effective workforce development. But states don't have the resources to do it alone. We need a federal investment that helps states and communities continue their work to provide innovation, access and outcomes that pay off for everyone. Your budget negotiations present a critical opportunity to leverage this worthy and much-needed solution for advancing America's economic future. Investing in early learning is good for children, great for families and essential for business.

Sincerely,

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President and CEO, Carlisle Construction Materials

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CEO, The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia

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CC: Budget Committee Conferees