

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

November 19, 2015

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chairman
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education, and Related Agencies
Appropriations
Committee on Appropriations
2372 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education, and Related Agencies
Appropriations
Committee on Appropriations
2413 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Cole and Ranking Member DeLauro:

We are writing to respectfully request that you restore funding for the Preschool Development Grant Program during upcoming negotiations on the Fiscal Year 2016 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations bill.

Research shows that high-quality, evidence-based early education benefits children, families, and communities. In fact, studies have shown a seven to ten dollar return on investment for every dollar spent on high-quality prekindergarten because of reductions in remedial education, juvenile delinquency, and teen pregnancy, and an increase in workforce readiness. Despite well-documented evidence, fewer than three in ten four-year-olds are currently enrolled in a high-quality preschool program and the U.S. continues to lag behind other countries in enrollment. Today, we rank 26th globally in preschool participation for four-year-olds. What is more, increasingly those children who are enrolled in early education programs throughout the country are more likely to be from higher income families, leading to a stark opportunity gap between low and moderate income children and their wealthier counterparts who attend preschool at higher rates.

States and local communities have demonstrated their desire to invest in early education, but federal support is critical to ensure that all children have access, particularly those in low and moderate income families. Preschool Development Grants play a critical role by providing funds to build and expand programs in high need communities. The program extends enrollment to children in families whose income is too high to qualify for Head Start, but who would not likely be able to afford private preschools. Ensuring that public preschool options are available to these children is vital, especially for working parents.

Currently, 18 states are making use of Preschool Development Grants but it is important to emphasize that more than 35 states applied to the program for funding. Those states that received awards have used them to expand high-quality early learning opportunities and improve state-level infrastructure and quality assurance efforts. In just one year, this funding has helped 200 communities to expand and improve preschools, giving 33,000 four-year-olds access to programs that make use of evidence-based curricula and practices. An additional 100,000 children are expected to be served during the third and fourth year of the grant, but will miss out on this critical experience if funding is eliminated.

The 18 participating states have invested significant time and resources to meet the matching requirements of these grants, and it would be unconscionable to fail to appropriate the funds they were promised. We therefore strongly urge you to consider the impact that the elimination of funding will have on current grantees, as well as the opportunities presented by the expansion of these grants, and to reinstate the program.

Sincerely,



Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress



Richard L. Hanna
Member of Congress



Donald S. Beyer Jr.
Member of Congress



Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress



Suzanne Bonamici
Member of Congress

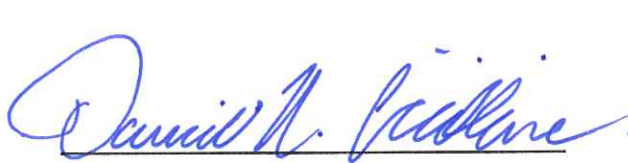
Michael E. Capuano
Member of Congress



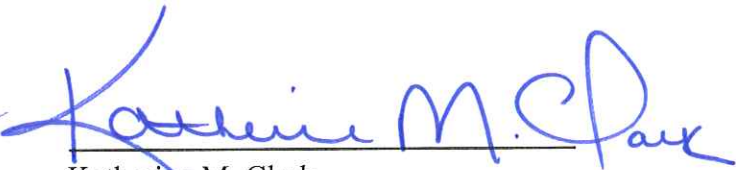
Tony Cárdenas
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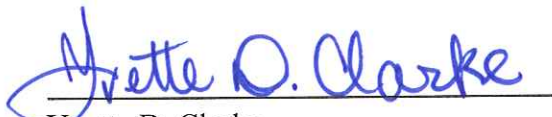
Joaquin Castro
Member of Congress



David N. Cicilline
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Katherine M. Clark
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Yvette D. Clarke
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Joe Courtney
Member of Congress



Peter A. DeFazio
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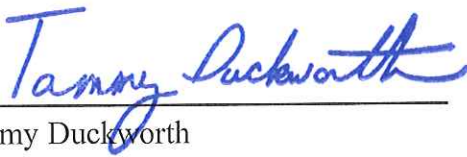
John K. Delaney
Member of Congress



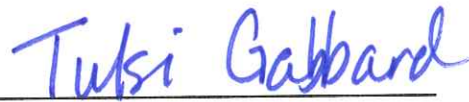
Suzan K. DelBene
Member of Congress



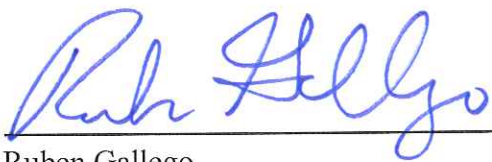
Mark DeSaulnier
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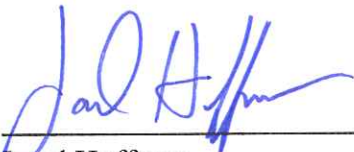
James A. Himes
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Eleanor Holmes Norton
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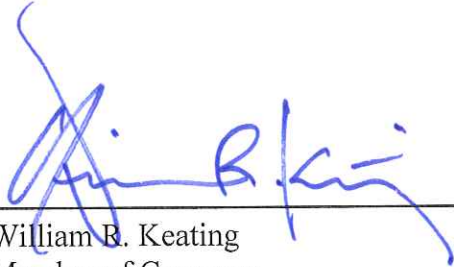
Michael M. Honda
Member of Congress



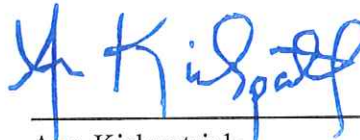
Jared Huffman
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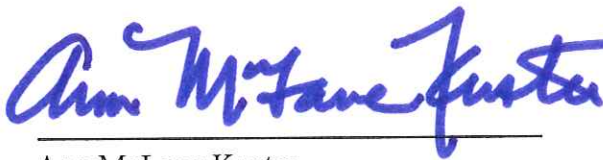
Sheila Jackson Lee
Member of Congress



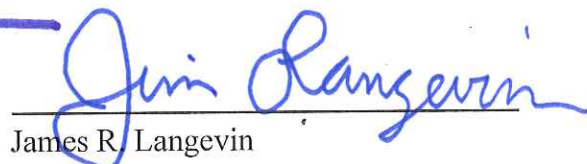
William B. Keating
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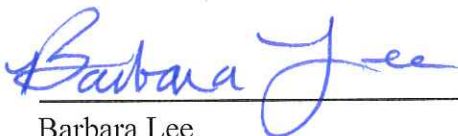
Ann Kirkpatrick
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Ann McLane Kuster
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James R. Langevin
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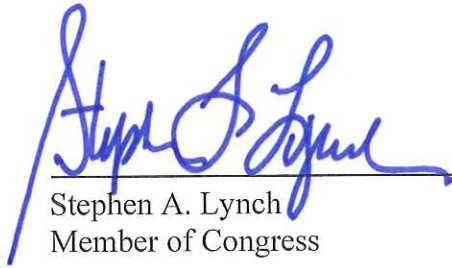
Barbara Lee
Member of Congress



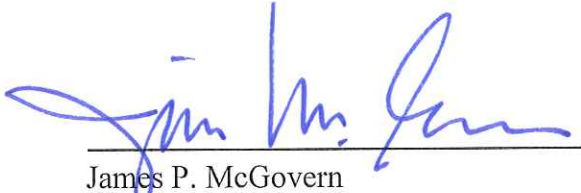
Frank A. LoBiondo
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Ben Ray Lujan
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Stephen A. Lynch
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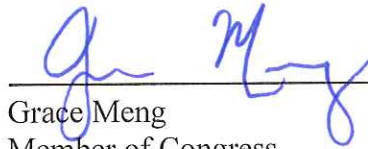
James P. McGovern
Member of Congress



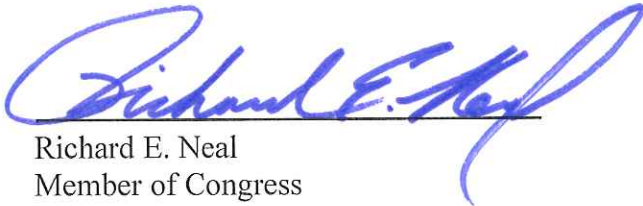
Martha McSally
Member of Congress



Gregory W. Meeks
Member of Congress



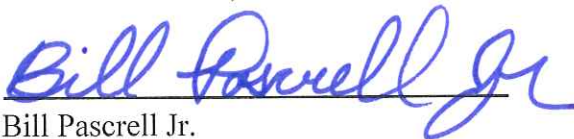
Grace Meng
Member of Congress



Richard E. Neal
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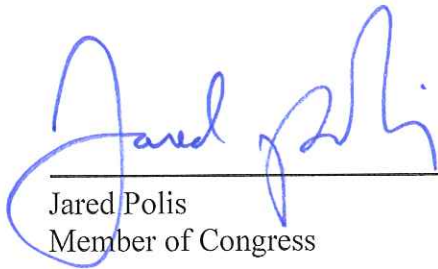
Donald Norcross
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Bill Pascrell Jr.
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Mark Pocan
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Jared Polis
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Charles B. Rangel
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Kathleen M. Rice
Member of Congress



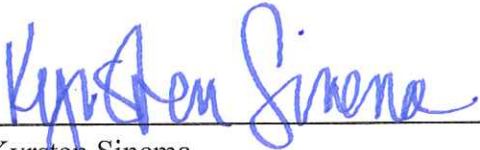
Cedric L. Richmond
Member of Congress



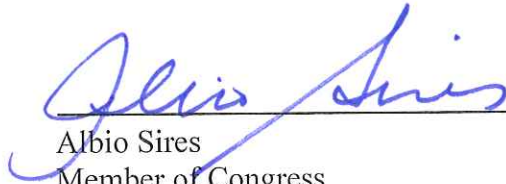
Mike Rogers
Member of Congress



Terri A. Sewell
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Kyrsten Sinema
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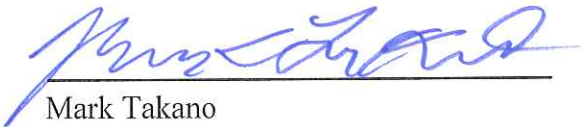
Albio Sires
Member of Congress



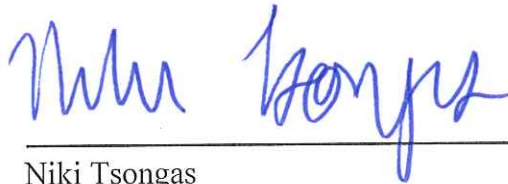
Elise M. Stefanik
Member of Congress



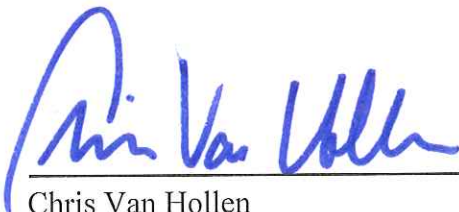
Mark Takai
Member of Congress



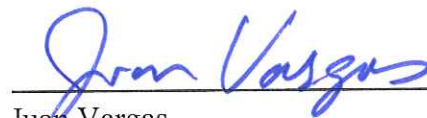
Mark Takano
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Niki Tsongas
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Chris Van Hollen
Member of Congress



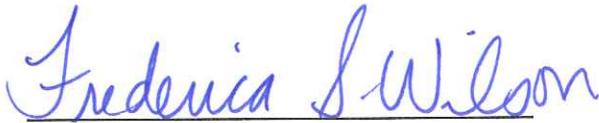
Juan Vargas
Member of Congress



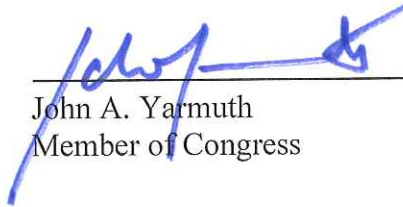
Bonnie Watson Coleman
Member of Congress



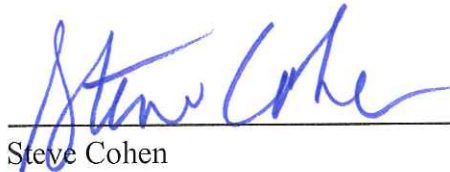
Peter Welch
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Frederica S. Wilson
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John A. Yarmuth
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Steve Cohen
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