

October 2, 2015

The Honorable Thad Cochran
United States Senate
Committee on Appropriations
S 128, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Harold Rogers
United States House of Representatives
Committee on Appropriations
H 305, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski
United States Senate
Committee on Appropriations
S 128, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nita Lowey
United States House of Representatives
Committee on Appropriations
H 305, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Cochran, Ranking Member Mikulski, Chairman Rogers, and Ranking Member Rogers:

We are writing from one of the 18 states who currently have a Preschool Development Grant and can attest to the benefit of having these funds supplement the work happening in our state. As you know, the Senate Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee and the full House Appropriations Committee recently approved spending bills that would eliminate funding for the Preschool Development Grants program. When you resume work on the fiscal year 2016 appropriations process, we urge you to restore funding for these grants, consistent with the subcommittee's and committee's wise decisions to invest in other vitally important early learning programs, such as Head Start, Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships, and the Child Care and Development Fund.

Federal early learning programs help states and municipalities build, provide, and strengthen their capacity to offer high-quality early learning programs to children from birth through five years of age. Currently, fewer than three in 10 four-year-olds participate in a high-quality preschool program. Many states do not have the capacity to provide such opportunities to the parents and children asking to participate. As a result, too many families miss opportunities to promote their child's growth, development, and learning while also preparing them to enter kindergarten ready to succeed.

Early learning programs not only benefit individual children and their families, they also benefit our communities, states, and the nation. Law enforcement leaders consistently and emphatically state that children who have great early learning opportunities are less likely to be involved in the juvenile and criminal justice systems; military recognize early learning's importance to ensuring access to a larger pool of qualified recruits; and businesses understand early learning's contribution to students' later workforce readiness

States and school districts like ours are committed to increasing investments in early learning programs, but federal resources are also required to promote equity by ensuring that the communities with the greatest needs have access to high quality preschool programs. States have already begun to use funds from early learning initiatives, like the Preschool Development Grants program, to enhance teacher professional development; build state systems to support quality across early learning opportunities regardless of funding stream; expand high-quality early learning opportunities; increase existing programs to full-year, full-day; create teacher qualification requirements that are scientifically proven to positively impact student success; increase pay for preschool teachers so their salaries are reflective of

their qualifications and dedication; and align standards so children are prepared to succeed in their later years of school.

A strong investment in the Preschool Development program, alongside other federal early learning initiatives, will allow states and school districts to further expand access to high-quality early learning opportunities. Thank you for considering our request.

Sincerely,

Alabama

AL Civil Justice Foundation
Alabama Association of School Boards
Alabama Association of Young Children
Alabama Children First
Alabama Dept. of Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention
Alabama Head Start Association
Alabama Partnership for Children
Alabama Power
Alabama Project LAUNCH
Alabama School Readiness Alliance
Alabama Strengthening Families
American Academy of Pediatrics, Alabama Chapter
Business Council of Alabama
Business Education Alliance
Childcare Resources
East Alabama Mental Health
Help Me Grow Alabama
James Rushton I Foundation
Mike & Gillian Goodrich Foundation
Reach Out and Read-Alabama
T.E.A.C.H. Alabama
Tom Joiner & Associates
VOICES for Alabama's Children

Arkansas

Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families

Arizona

Children's Action Alliance, Arizona
Southwest Human Development, Arizona

Connecticut

Connecticut Early Childhood Alliance

Hawaii

Hawaii Executive Office on Early Learning
Hawaii State Public Charter School Commission (Aha Kula Ho'āmana)

Representative Roy Takumi, Hawaii State House of Representatives
Representative Takahi Ohno, Hawaii State House of Representatives
Good Beginnings Alliance
Good Beginnings Alliance/Hawaii Children's Action Network

Illinois

Children Home + Aid
Illinois Action for Children
Metropolitan Family Services
Ounce of Prevention
Voices for Illinois Children

Louisiana

Capital Area United Way
Child Care Association of Louisiana
Citizens for 1 Greater New Orleans
Committee of 100 for Economic Development, Inc.
Entergy Corporation
Kingsley House
League of Women Voters of New Orleans
Louisiana Association of United Ways
Louisiana Budget Project
Mr. James D. Garvey, Jr., Vice President, Board of Elementary and Secondary Education
National Council of Jewish Women, Greater New Orleans Section
Policy Institute for Children
Stand for Children Louisiana
United Way of Acadiana
United Way of Central Louisiana
United Way of Northeast Louisiana
United Way of Northwest Louisiana
United Way of Southeast Louisiana
Urban League of Greater New Orleans
Walter J. Leger III, Speaker Pro Tempore, LA House of Representatives

Massachusetts

Representative Adrian Madaro, First Suffolk
Representative Alice Peisch, Fourteenth Norfolk, Co-Chair, Joint Committee on Education
Representative Angelo Puppolo, Jr, 12th Hampden District
Representative Benjamin Swan, Eleventh Hampden
Representative Carlos Gonzalez, Tenth Hampden
Superintendent Daniel Warwick, Springfield Public Schools
Representative Aaron Vega, Fifth Hampden
Representative Jay Livingstone, Eighth Suffolk
Representative Jose Tosado, Ninth Hampden
Senator Donald Humason, Second Hampden and Hampshire
Senator Eric Lesser, First Hampden and Hampshire
Senator Sal DiDomenico, Middlesex and Suffolk, Vice Chair, Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Senator Sonia Chang Diaz, Second Suffolk, Co-Chair, Joint Committee on Education
Assistant Superintendent, Dr. Paul Hyry-Dermith, Holyoke Public Schools
Mayor Alex Morse, City of Holyoke
District Receiver Dr. Stephen Zrike, Holyoke Public Schools
Holyoke Public Schools
Irene E. and George A. Davis Foundation
Leo Delaney, CEO & President, Ellis Memorial, Boston
Nurtury, Boston
PreK-3rd Grade Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment, Springfield Public Schools
Square One, Springfield
Stand for Children Massachusetts
Strategies for Children
Thrive in Five, Boston
YMCA of Greater Springfield

Maine

Representative Margaret Rotundo, House Co-Chair, Maine's Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs
Howard Tuttle, Superintendent, Regional School Unit #12
John McDonald, Superintendent, Regional School Unit #13
Ronald Ramsey, Superintendent, Regional School Unit #37
Ken Coville, Superintendent, Regional School Unit #74
Bill Webster, Superintendent, Lewiston School District
Ed Cervone, Executive Director, Educate Maine
Eliza Townsend, Executive Director, Maine Women's Lobby
Cheryl Walker, President, Maine Association for the Education of Young Children
Karen Heck, Senior Program Officer, Bingham Program
Rita Furlow, Senior Policy Analyst, Maine Children's Alliance

Maryland

Maryland Family Network

Montana

Montana Budget and Policy Center

Nevada

Children's Advocacy Alliance

New Jersey

Assemblywoman Mila M. Jasey (D) 27th Legislative District, NJ
Advocates for Children of New Jersey
Education Law Center
New Jersey Association of School Administrators
New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association
PreK Our Way
Senator M. Teresa Ruiz (D), Legislative District 29, NJ
Senator Ronald L. Rice (D) 28th Legislative District, NJ

New York

Center for Children's Initiatives, New York City

Rhode Island

Rhode Island Senate President Teresa Paiva Weed
Beautiful Beginnings, Providence
Central Falls Public Schools
Dr. Pam High, Hasbro Children's Hospital
Children's Friend
Providence Public Schools
Rhode Island KIDS COUNT
Senator Gayle Golden, Senate District 3
Senator Juan Pichardo, Senate District 2
United Way of Rhode Island
Woonsocket Head Start and Child Care

Tennessee

Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth

Vermont

Voices for Vermont's Children

Virginia

Virginia Association for the Education of Young Children (VAEYC)
Voices for Virginia's Children