

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 15, 2019

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 2020 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 available through Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part C (Grants for Infants and Families) and Part B Section 619 (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 care and education programs represents one of our greatest opportunities for a significant return on federal investments. Child care enables parents to work productively, contribute to our economy, and gain and maintain financial stability for their families. In addition, 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.

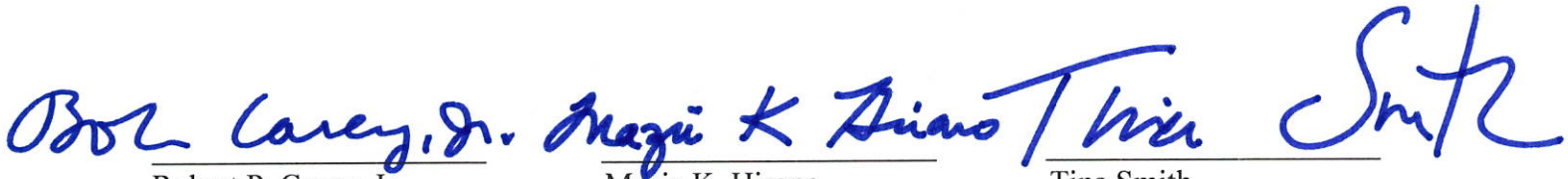
Despite the promise of substantial returns, federal early childhood programs reach only a fraction of eligible children and families. Five out of six children who are eligible for federal child care assistance do not receive it. The average annual cost of full-time, center-based child care is more expensive than the average annual cost of in-state tuition and fees. Half of Americans live in places with a shortage of licensed child care providers or slots, which particularly affects rural populations. Meanwhile, only about a third of eligible preschool-aged children are able to participate in Head Start; and only seven 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 programs.

We are grateful for your work to provide historic child care investments in fiscal years 2018 and 2019. States have committed these funds to addressing pressing needs, including increasing payment rates for child care providers, serving families on the waiting list for assistance, and implementing reforms included in the 2014 CCDBG reauthorization. Yet, further investments are critical to fully address gaps in the affordability, availability and quality of child care.

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 and 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 Section 619 of IDEA, which support critical early intervention services for infants and toddlers. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



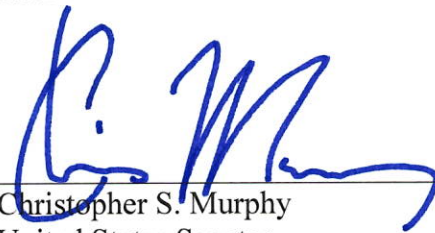
Robert P. Casey, Jr.  
United States Senator

Mazie K. Hirono  
United States Senator

Tina Smith  
United States Senator



Martin Heinrich  
United States Senator



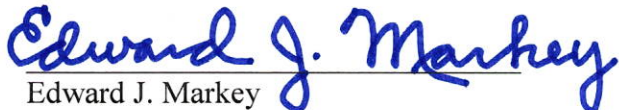
Christopher S. Murphy  
United States Senator



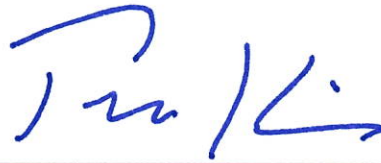
Margaret Wood Hassan  
United States Senator



Tammy Duckworth  
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey  
United States Senator



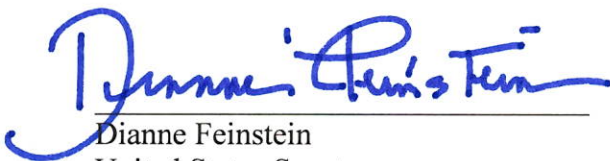
Tim Kaine  
United States Senator



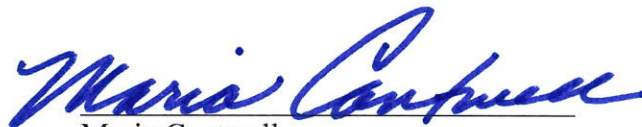
Sherrod Brown  
United States Senator



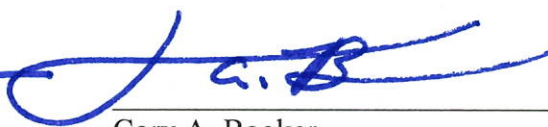

Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senator



Dianne Feinstein  
United States Senator

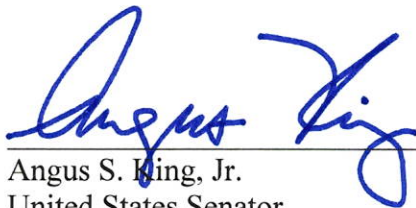


Maria Cantwell  
United States Senator



Joe Manchin III  
United States Senator

Cory A. Booker  
United States Senator



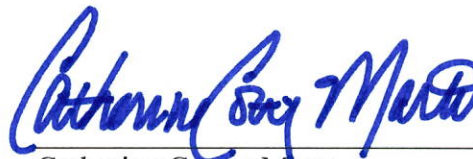
Angus S. King, Jr.  
United States Senator



Sheldon Whitehouse  
United States Senator



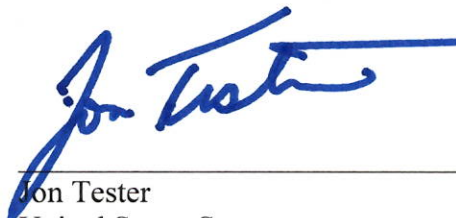
Kirsten Gillibrand  
United States Senator



Catherine Cortez Masto  
United States Senator



Jeanne Shaheen  
United States Senator



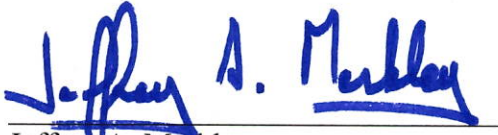
Jon Tester  
United States Senator



Gary C. Peters  
United States Senator



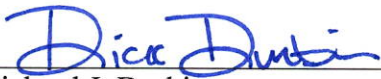
Doug Jones  
United States Senator



Jeffrey A. Merkley  
United States Senator



Mark R. Warner  
United States Senator



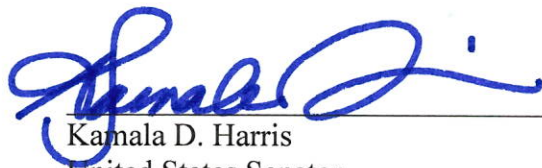
Richard J. Durbin  
United States Senator



Debbie Stabenow  
United States Senator



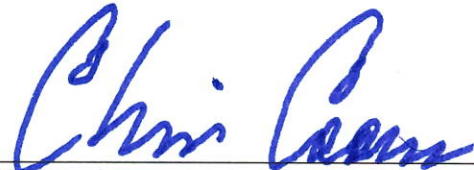
Bernard Sanders  
United States Senator



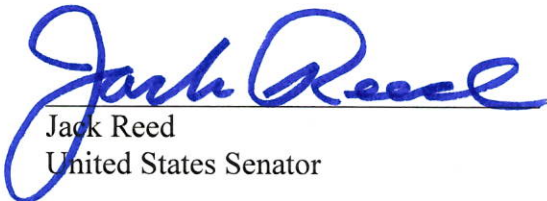
Kamala D. Harris  
United States Senator



Robert Mendendez  
United States Senator



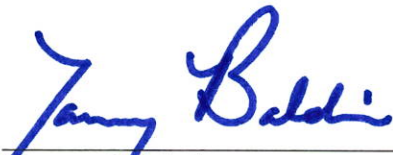
Christopher A. Coons  
United States Senator



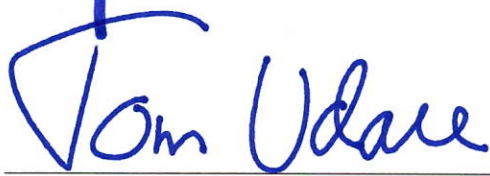
Jack Reed  
United States Senator



Elizabeth Warren  
United States Senator




Tammy Baldwin  
United States Senator



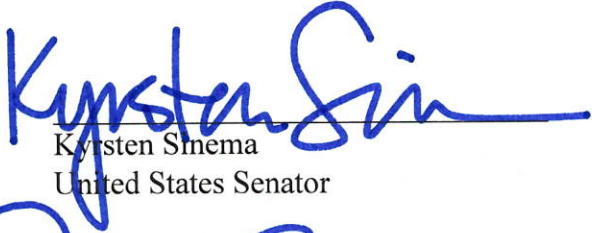
Tom Udall  
United States Senator



Thomas R. Carper  
United States Senator



Ron Wyden  
United States Senator



Krysten Sinema  
United States Senator



Benjamin L. Cardin  
United States Senator



Jacky Rosen  
United States Senator



Amy Klobuchar  
United States Senator