

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

November 22, 2019

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Chairwoman
House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Labor-HHS-Education
& Related Agencies
2362 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tom Cole
Ranking Member
House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Labor-HHS-Education
& Related Agencies
2362 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman DeLauro and Ranking Member Cole:

First, let us add our voices to the chorus of Americans grateful for your leadership on the Labor-HHS-Education & Related Agencies Subcommittee, including the work completed on FY20 thus far. Once again, your ceaseless commitment to the health and well-being of our nation's children and individuals often caught on the fringes or living paycheck-to-paycheck is evident.

We want to thank you for including funding to address childhood trauma and enable the Head Start and Early Head Start workforce to meet the needs of the children and families who have experienced trauma. As the commitment of Congress to find solutions to the addiction crises in our country suggests, the misuse and abuse of opioids and prescription medications have devastated communities - rural, urban, tribal, frontier. This scourge knows no social nor economic barrier, and often, the true victims are children, particularly young children, who can be deeply affected by the trauma that can stem from living in a home where there is addiction.

Federally-sponsored Head Start and Early Head Start programs, serving more than one million children each year, are not only counted on to prepare kids for kindergarten, ensure family support, and provide basic medical and nutritional care, but increasingly address the far-reaching devastation stemming from addiction. Head Start programs are now at the frontlines of addressing learning delays attributable to neonatal abstinence syndrome, coordinating care for children during parent treatment programs, providing stability for surging numbers of children in foster care, and overall triaging a significant uptick in challenging behaviors that far outstrip resources and capabilities. By working with local community systems to provide high-quality educational and health services to children and partner with caregivers on pathways to success, Head Start is able to avoid bureaucratic barriers and reach children and families most in need. We must continue to support Head Start programs to keep pace with the rising costs of strengthening communities.

We strongly encourage you to stand fast and hold the line on trauma-informed care for Head Start for Fiscal Year 2020. We are readily aware of the top-line funding constraints, but the data is clear: intervention at an early age often staves off much more expensive life and societal costs. We must do our level best to help children who are caught up in this crisis.

Again, thank you for your leadership. On behalf of the Freshmen Working Group on Addiction and others in Congress who are concerned about the impacts of addiction on children, families, and communities, we look forward to continuing to work with you to find solutions to this nation's opioid epidemic and support the children caught in its grip.

Sincerely,



David Trone
Member of Congress



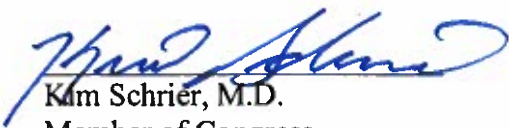
Denver Riggleman
Member of Congress



Cynthia Axne
Member of Congress



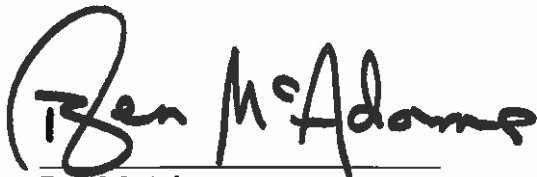
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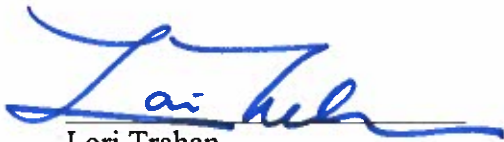
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