

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

March 13, 2020

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro  
Chairwoman  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and  
Human Services, and Education  
2413 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Tom Cole  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and  
Human Services, and Education  
2207 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairwoman DeLauro and Ranking Member Cole:

As the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee develops its Fiscal Year 2021 appropriations bill, we respectfully urge you to fund the Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five (PDG B-5) program at a level of at least \$400 million. We appreciate the Subcommittee's commitment to this program as demonstrated through its \$25 million increase in funding for FY20 and we hope to build upon these investments.

In 2015, Congress authorized PDG B-5 in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) at \$250 million per fiscal year (P.L. 114-95). The inclusion of PDG B-5 in ESSA marks the first time that Congress has dedicated specific funds to promote access to high-quality early childhood education as part of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). The PDG B-5 program affirms both the importance of early learning in advancing equal access to education and the central role of states in leading early childhood coordination and quality efforts. The program also represents a unique opportunity for the federal government to support state investments and initiatives as they consider how to best align and continue to grow their early learning systems.

To date, states have shown tremendous interest in the PDG B-5 program. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) initially expected to award a maximum of 40 grants in year-one, however, in December 2018, the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) awarded 46 states and territories initial one-year planning grants that ranged from \$538,000 to \$10.6 million. Then, in December 2019, all of the initial applicants chose to continue this work by applying for an extremely competitive second round of grants. Due to limited funding, ACF was only able to award 20 states three-year renewal grants to implement the strategic plans they developed with their 2018 planning grants. Additionally, 6 states and territories who did not previously receive PDG B-5 funding were awarded initial planning grants.

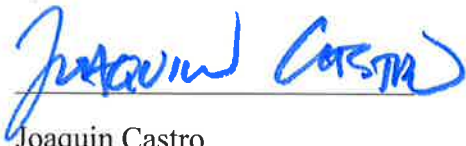
Governors from across the country are applauding these critical federal investments, and the comprehensive needs assessments and implementation of the strategic plans are well underway in all 20 jurisdictions. While we were pleased to see the overwhelming participation of 46 states and territories in the initial one-year planning grants, due to funding constraints among a strong

grant competition, 26 jurisdictions were left unable to move forward with implementation grants. We were incredibly pleased by the \$25 million funding increase for PDG B-5 in FY20, which may allow a small number of additional states and territories to be awarded implementation grants, but more assistance is needed.

For the first time ever, comprehensive needs assessments and strategic plans to maximize early learning and care systems have been conducted simultaneously in 46 states and territories. Congress has a unique opportunity to foster these state lead early learning initiatives by providing increased federal funding of this critical program to ensure all states and territories have the resources they need to implement the strategic plans they have designed.

We respectfully request the Subcommittee increase funding for the PDG B-5 program to at least \$400 million to allow all states and territories the opportunity to move forward in their development of comprehensive early learning systems.

Sincerely,



Joaquin Castro

Member of Congress



John Katko

Member of Congress

Preschool Development Grant Birth – Five, FY 2021  
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March 13, 2020

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