

SUPPORT PRESCHOOL DEVELOPMENT GRANTS

DEADLINE: April 9th COB

Dear Colleague:

We invite you to join us in requesting that the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education support at least \$500 million dollars in funding for the Preschool Development Grant program.

The Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five (PDG B-5) program, overseen by the Department of Health and Human Services in conjunction with the Department of Education, seeks to increase access to high-quality early learning programs for our nation's young learners. Congress last authorized \$250 million for this program under the Every Student Succeeds Act, and appropriated an additional \$25 million for fiscal year 2020, which was sustained for fiscal year 2021. The increase we request for fiscal year 2022, providing an additional \$225 million to the grant program, will ensure that the federal government continues to support state investments in early learning systems, especially as they were heavily impacted due to COVID-19. With a growing school readiness gap between low-income and high-income families, it is more important than ever that we strengthen targeted, effective programs – like the PDG B-5 program – that cultivate readiness amongst underserved students.

Research shows the immense benefits of high-quality preschool, in both the short-term and long-term. Children who are enrolled have greater test scores, are less likely to repeat a grade, and are more likely to graduate from high school. Later in life, those enrolled are more likely to attend a four-year college, own a home, and less likely to commit crimes. In order to foster a globally competitive 21st century workforce and strengthen our communities, we must continue to invest in early childhood education.

We urge you to join us in sending the below letter, requesting this important funding for the PDG B-5 program. The deadline to cosign is April 9th COB. If you would like to sign on to the letter, please fill out this [FORM](#) with your office contact information. If you have questions, please contact Kaitlyn Montan in Congressman Castro's office at Kaitlyn.Montan@mail.house.gov or Andrew Nicholson in Congressman Katko's office at Andrew.Nicholson@mail.house.gov.

Sincerely,

Joaquin Castro

Member of Congress

John Katko

Member of Congress

March XX, 2021

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 (FY) 2022 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 \$500 million. We appreciate the Subcommittee's commitment to this program as demonstrated through the recent and sustained increases in FY2020 and FY2021, and with FY2022 marking the start of a new grant cycle, we hope to build upon these investments.

Recognizing the importance of early learning in ensuring children are prepared for kindergarten and do not fall behind, PDG B-5 was authorized in 2015 as part of the bipartisan 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 Congress has dedicated funds to promote access to high-quality early childhood education as part of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. 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 and local investments and initiatives as they consider how to best optimize funding streams and 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 the first year, however, in December 2018, the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) awarded 46 states and territories

initial 1-year planning grants that ranged from \$538,000 to \$10.6 million. In December 2019, among competitive applications from all 46 states and territories, ACF awarded 20 states 3-year renewal grants to implement the strategic plans they developed with their initial grants, and 6 states and territories who had not previously received PDG B-5 funding were awarded 1-year planning grants. In 2020, we were pleased to see a funding increase of \$25 million for FY2020, which allowed ACF to award 3-year renewal grants to 3 additional states.

Governors across the country have applauded these critical federal investments, and for the first time ever, the majority of states and territories have conducted comprehensive needs assessments and strategic plans to maximize early learning and care systems, providing a thoughtful roadmap to improve the coordination, quality, and delivery of services. Due to funding constraints, however, of the 46 states and territories who received initial planning grants, only half received funding to implement these plans. These states and territories will need continued Congressional support to carry out their plans with fidelity, particularly as they recover from the pandemic. Those who did not receive implementation grants could still significantly benefit from federal support to carry out vitally important unfunded projects.

Congress has a unique opportunity to foster state-led early learning initiatives by providing increased funding of this critical program to ensure all states and territories have the resources they need to implement quality early childhood programs. This work has become even more important given the coronavirus pandemic's devastating impact on early childhood providers and the families they serve. As state budgets are reeling from the economic impact of the pandemic, increased funding for PDG B-5, a program designed to help states rebuild their child care systems from the ground up, would help states ensure their child care systems emerge from the pandemic stronger and better able to meet families' needs.

We respectfully request the Subcommittee increase funding for the PDG B-5 program to at least \$500 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