

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

April 28, 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.

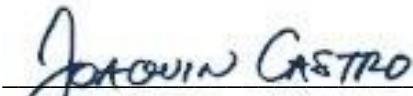
Governors across the country have applauded these critical federal investments, and for the first time ever, the majority of states and territories have conducted comprehensive needs assessments

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

Additional Co-signers:

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/s/  
Alma S. Adams, Ph.D.  
Member of Congress

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/s/  
Donald S. Beyer Jr.  
Member of Congress

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/s/  
Earl Blumenauer  
Member of Congress

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Jake Auchincloss  
Member of Congress

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/s/  
Sanford D. Bishop, Jr.  
Member of Congress

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/s/  
Suzanne Bonamici  
Member of Congress

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Jamaal Bowman, Ed.D  
Member of Congress

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David N. Cicilline  
Member of Congress

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Mark DeSaulnier  
Member of Congress

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Anthony G. Brown  
Member of Congress

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Steve Cohen  
Member of Congress

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Lloyd Doggett  
Member of Congress

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Julia Brownley  
Member of Congress

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Joe Courtney  
Member of Congress

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Dwight Evans  
Member of Congress

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Cori Bush  
Member of Congress

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Jason Crow  
Member of Congress

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Brian Fitzpatrick  
Member of Congress

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G. K. Butterfield  
Member of Congress

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Member of Congress

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Member of Congress

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Salud Carbajal  
Member of Congress

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Danny K. Davis  
Member of Congress

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Sylvia R. Garcia  
Member of Congress

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Tony Cárdenas  
Member of Congress

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Peter A. DeFazio  
Member of Congress

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Al Green  
Member of Congress

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André Carson  
Member of Congress

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Diana DeGette  
Member of Congress

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Raul Grijalva  
Member of Congress

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Sean Casten  
Member of Congress

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Antonio Delgado  
Member of Congress

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Alcee L. Hastings  
Member of Congress

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Jahana Hayes  
Member of Congress

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Ron Kind  
Member of Congress

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A. Donald McEachin  
Member of Congress

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Jim Himes  
Member of Congress

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Ann McLane Kuster  
Member of Congress

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James P. McGovern  
Member of Congress

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Sheila Jackson Lee  
Member of Congress

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Conor Lamb  
Member of Congress

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David B. McKinley  
Member of Congress

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Sara Jacobs  
Member of Congress

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James R. Langevin  
Member of Congress

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Jerry McNerney  
Member of Congress

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Pramila Jayapal  
Member of Congress

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Member of Congress

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Gwen Moore  
Member of Congress

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Eddie Bernice Johnson  
Member of Congress

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Teresa Leger Fernandez  
Member of Congress

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Joseph D. Morelle  
Member of Congress

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Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.  
Member of Congress

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Tom Malinowski  
Member of Congress

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Joe Neguse  
Member of Congress

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William R. Keating  
Member of Congress

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Carolyn B. Maloney  
Member of Congress

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Eleanor Holmes Norton  
Member of Congress

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Ro Khanna  
Member of Congress

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Lucy McBath  
Member of Congress

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Tom O'Halleran  
Member of Congress

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Ilhan Omar  
Member of Congress

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Bobby L. Rush  
Member of Congress

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Abigail D. Spanberger  
Member of Congress

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Jimmy Panetta  
Member of Congress

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Gregorio Kilili Camacho  
Sablan  
Member of Congress

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Jackie Speier  
Member of Congress

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Bill Pascrell, Jr.  
Member of Congress

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Michael F.Q. San Nicolas  
Member of Congress

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Marilyn Strickland  
Member of Congress

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Donald M. Payne, Jr.  
Member of Congress

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Jan Schakowsky  
Member of Congress

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Thomas R. Suozzi  
Member of Congress

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Chellie Pingree  
Member of Congress

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Kim Schrier, M.D  
Member of Congress

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Mark Takano  
Member of Congress

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Stacey E. Plaskett  
Member of Congress

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David Scott  
Member of Congress

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Member of Congress

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Member of Congress

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Member of Congress

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Member of Congress

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Jamie Raskin  
Member of Congress

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Albio Sires  
Member of Congress

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Peter Welch  
Member of Congress

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Kathleen M. Rice  
Member of Congress

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Elissa Slotkin  
Member of Congress

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Nikema Williams  
Member of Congress

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Frederica S. Wilson  
Member of Congress

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John Yarmuth  
Member of Congress

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Don Young  
Member of Congress

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Bobby L. Rush  
Member of Congress