

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 7, 2021

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chair
Subcommittee on Labor, Health, and
Human Services, and Education
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health, and
Human Services, and Education
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chair Murray and Ranking Member Blunt:

We request that as you weigh difficult budget choices for the Fiscal Year 2022 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 the 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.

Accordingly, we specifically request that the FY 2022 appropriations bill provide:

- An additional \$6.1 billion for the Child Care and Development Block Grant (a total of \$12 billion);
- An additional \$1.34 billion for Head Start (total of \$12.1 billion), including \$247 million for a cost-of-living adjustment to support the Head Start and Early Head Start workforce, \$363 million for quality improvement to address the impacts of trauma and \$730 million to align Head Start programs with traditional k-12 model;
- An additional \$778.9 million for early childhood services provided through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), including an additional \$493 million for Part C (a total of \$974.8 million) and an additional \$285.9 million for Part B, Section 619 programs (a total of \$683.5 million); and
- An additional \$225 million for the Preschool Development Grants Birth through Five (PDG B-5) program (a total of \$500 million).

Funding for early 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

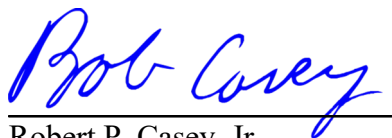
welfare programs, and increased workforce productivity of children who receive a high-quality early education.

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 recent fiscal years. Yet, further investments are critical to fully address gaps in the affordability, availability and quality of child care. The pandemic shined a light on how critical child care is to our economy and the financial stability of families, as well as the precarious state of our child care infrastructure due to chronic underinvestment. Underinvestment in child care not only limits opportunities for children, it drives economic hardship for working parents, especially mothers, child care workers, who are primarily women, and employers who struggle to recruit and retain workers. Child care is a crucial part of our economic infrastructure, and we need to treat it as such.

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 care and 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 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



Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator



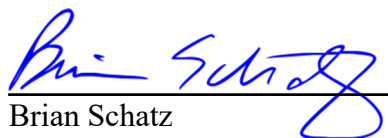
Benjamin L. Cardin
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Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator



Maria Cantwell
United States Senator



Brian Schatz
United States Senator



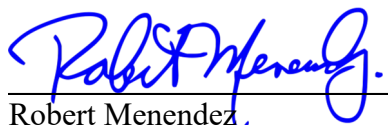
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Sherrod Brown
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Debbie Stabenow
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Robert Menendez
United States Senator



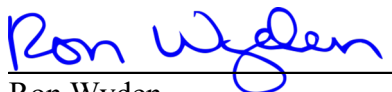
Christopher S. Murphy
United States Senator



Tim Kaine
United States Senator



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



Ron Wyden
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Sheldon Whitehouse
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Kirsten Gillibrand
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Mark R. Warner
United States Senator




Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



Mark Kelly
United States Senator



Jon Tester
United States Senator



Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



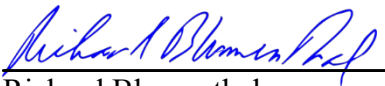
Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



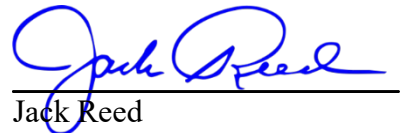
Bernard Sanders
United States Senator



Cory A. Booker
United States Senator



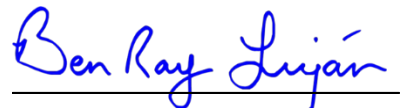
Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



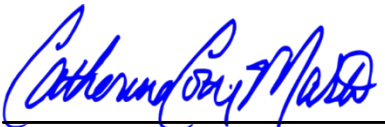
Jack Reed
United States Senator



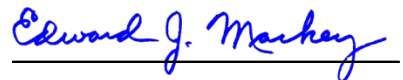
Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator



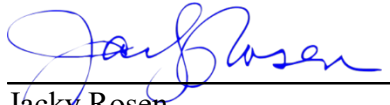
Ben Ray Luján
United States Senator



Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



Jacky Rosen
United States Senator



Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator



Alex Padilla
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Gary C. Peters
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