Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

April 27, 2022

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Chairwoman
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and
Human Services, and Education
House
Appropriations Committee
2413 Rayburn House Office
Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tom Cole
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and
Human Services, and Education
House
Appropriations Committee
2207 Rayburn House Office
Building
Washington, DC 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 2023 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 in FY2022 appropriations with a funding level of $450 million, as this funding is critical to support and expanding State and local capacity to provide early childhood care and education for children, 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 3-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. Recognizing the

potential impact and the tremendous interest from states and territories, for FY2020 Congress appropriated an additional $25 million in funding, which allowed ACF to extend 3 additional renewal grants in the spring of 2020. In December 2020, 5 of the 6 states and territories that received an initial grant in 2019 were awarded a renewal grant, bringing the total number of implementation grants to 28.

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 28 jurisdictions. Current and proposed activities of the renewal grantees demonstrate that states are successfully using these funds to reach more children and families, whether by shifting resources where they're most needed or realizing efficiencies within their existing systems. This work is all the more valuable as states continue to recover from the pandemic. 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, nearly half of these jurisdictions have been unable to move forward with implementation grants.
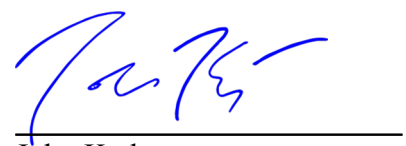
PDG B-5 remains an innovative solution that empowers states to increase the quality and efficiency of existing early learning programs and systems, while thinking strategically about how to optimize federal and state funding streams. Congress has a unique opportunity to foster state-led early learning initiatives by providing increased federal funding for 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 $500 million to allow all states and territories the opportunity to move forward in their development of comprehensive early learning systems.
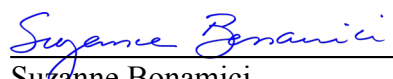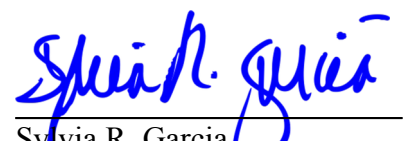
Sincerely,

Joaquin Castro
Member of Congress

John Katko
Member of Congress
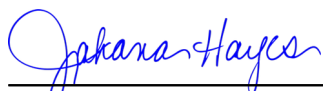
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Lucy McBath
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Mark DeSaulnier
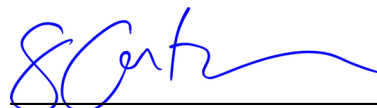Member of Congress

Dwight Evans
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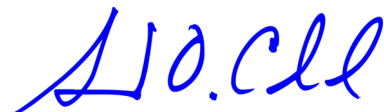Member of Congress

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Member of Congress
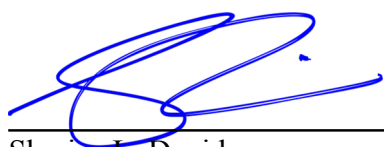
Shontel M. Brown
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Ro Khanna
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Salud Carbajal
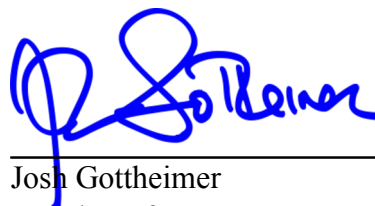Member of Congress

Tom Malinowski
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Sablan
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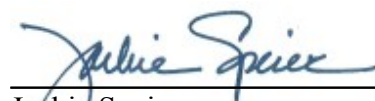
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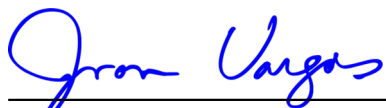
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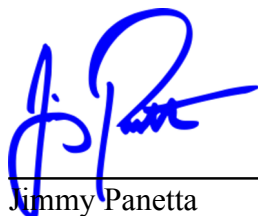
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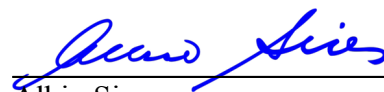
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Albio Sires
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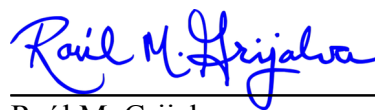
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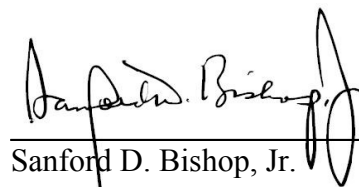
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Nikema Williams
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Kathleen M. Rice
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Sanford D. Bishop, Jr.
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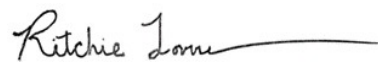
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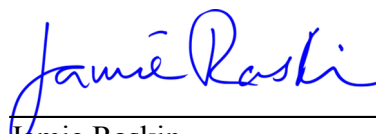
Anthony G. Brown
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Alma S. Adams, Ph.D.
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Chris Pappas
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Jamie Raskin
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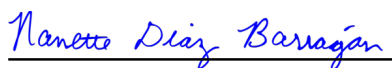Jerry McNerney
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Ayanna Pressley
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Joseph D. Morelle
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Nanette Diaz Barragán
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Kim Schrier, M.D.
Member of Congress
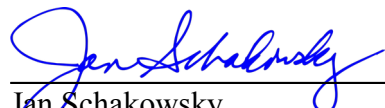
Pramila Jayapal
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Cori Bush
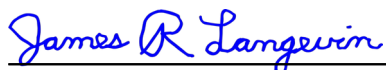Member of Congress

Andrew R. Garbarino
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Jan Schakowsky
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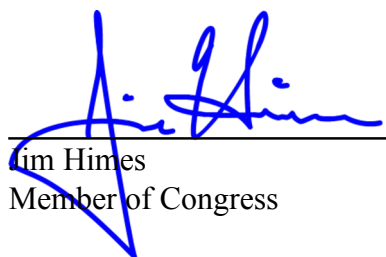
Jésus G. "Chuy" García
Member of Congress

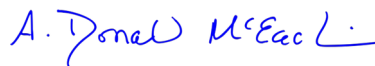Lloyd Doggett
Member of Congress

James R. Langevin
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Mary Gay Scanlon
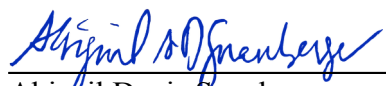Member of Congress

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A. Donald McEachin
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Bobby L. Rush
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Bill Pascrell, Jr.
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Abigail Davis Spanberger
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Al Lawson
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Jake Auchincloss
Member of Congress

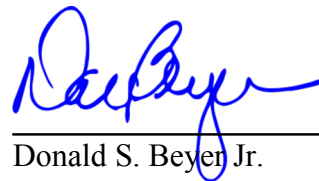Deborah K. Ross
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Donald S. Beyer Jr.
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Diana DeGette
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Danny K. Davis
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André Carson
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Tom O'Halleran
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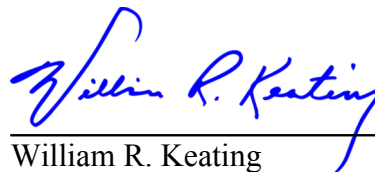
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Julia Brownley
Member of Congress

Elissa Slotkin
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William R. Keating
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