

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

May 1, 2024

The Honorable Robert Aderholt
Chairman
House Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on Labor,
Health, and Human Services
and Related Agencies
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on Labor,
Health, and Human Services
and Related Agencies
Washington D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Aderholt and Ranking Member DeLauro:

As you consider Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education appropriations legislation, we urge you to include the following essential investments in early education, early intervention, and high-quality child care:

Provide at least \$12.4 billion for the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) for FY 2025. CCDBG provides federal funding to states for child care subsidies for families with low-incomes with children younger than 13 years old. Efforts to maintain and expand CCDBG funding in recent years have helped states make important progress in addressing the care needs of children, families, and providers. The funding increase for CCDBG in FY 2018, which doubled funding for the program, helped decrease the number of children on waitlists for child care assistance by 55 percent and enabled more than half of states to increase payments to providers by an average increase of more than \$100 a month per child.¹

Despite the bipartisan support for CCDBG, significant gaps remain in the federal programs to support access to affordable child care and early learning. Improving access to high-quality, affordable child care is a pressing economic priority for our country. Child care challenges for parents and caregivers in the workforce cost the economy an estimated \$122 billion each year in lost earnings, productivity, and revenue, while productivity problems associated with child care challenges cost employers \$23 billion annually. In addition to the overall costs, limited child care access also undermines our workforce. One in four parents of children under three have been fired from or quit a job because of challenges securing child care, and 41 percent have turned down a new job offer for this reason.² The ongoing challenges affecting child care access are limiting economic growth, threatening employers and small businesses, and hurting working families.

¹ Schulman, Karen, *Early Progress: State Child Care Assistance Policies 2019*, National Women's Law Center (Oct. 2019), <https://nwlc.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/NWLC-State-Child-Care-Assistance-Policies-2019-final.pdf>.

² Ready Nation, *\$122 Billion: The Growing, Annual Cost of the Infant-Toddler Child Care Crisis*, Council for a Strong America (Feb. 2023), <https://www.strongnation.org/articles/2038-122-billion-the-growing-annual-cost-of-the-infant-toddler-child-care-crisis>.

By delivering on the bipartisan goal³ of funding CCDBG at a \$12.4 billion level, we can significantly increase the number of children and families able to access child care subsidies. This will help lower the cost of care for working families and expand the number of children who can access the care that supports positive physical and brain development. Specifically, increased investment would result in the following:

- **Helping more families access child care:** The demand for child care from working families is clear, but the lack of supply is preventing parents and guardians across the nation from accessing the care they need. The limited supply of care also directly contributes to the unreachable cost of child care. Paying for child care is one of the highest costs in a family's annual budget. The Women's Bureau of the Department of Labor projects through its National Database of Childcare Prices the median annual costs of child care, depending on provider, range from \$5,357 and \$17,171 in 2022 dollars. Based on this data, the National Database of Childcare Prices shows that some families are spending as much as 20 percent of their annual income on care. This cost is not sustainable for any family. Unfortunately, CCDBG only reaches one in nine children who are eligible. A significant increase in CCDBG funding will expand the program's reach and ability to provide high-quality care to more eligible children who are not currently receiving subsidies.
- **Increasing payments and wages for providers:** Although prior increases in CCDBG funding have helped some states increase at least some of their payment rates for providers serving families receiving child care assistance, more work is needed. According to the Bureau of Statistics at the Department of Labor, child care workers only earn an average of \$13.71 per hour and is among one of the lowest paid sectors.⁴ The inadequate wages paid to caregivers also drives staffing shortages: the turnover in child care workers is approximately 65 percent higher than in a typical job.⁵ These low wages are also disproportionately harmful to women, especially women of color, who make up a large proportion of the care workforce.⁶ By committing to greater investment in CCDBG, states are further incentivized to make changes that improve the quality of child care for all children and acknowledge child care providers as essential to our economic well-being.
- **Enabling women to fully participate in the workforce:** Studies have found that increases in CCDBG subsidies have the potential to substantially increase workforce participation and employment rates for mothers with low incomes in the United States.⁷

³ Letter from Congresswoman Katherine M. Clark and 132 colleagues, to House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health, and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies (April 27, 2022), <https://katherineclark.house.gov/press-releases?ID=FFAA8165-20B8-4DAA-969B-7B9A9E4E6AA0>; Letter from Senator Richard Burr and 4 colleagues, to Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health, and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies (May 23, 2022), https://www.collins.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/ccdbg_letter.pdf.

⁴ Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Outlook Handbook, Childcare Workers, at <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/personal-care-and-service/childcare-workers.htm> (visited January 24, 2024).

⁵ <https://www.clevelandfed.org/publications/cd-reports/2024/20240119-childcare-and-education-workforce>

⁶ Austin, Lea J.E., Edwards, Bethany, and Whitebook, Marcy, Racial Wage Gaps in Early Education Employment, Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, University of California, Berkeley, <https://csce.berkeley.edu/publications/brief/racial-wage-gaps-in-early-education-employment/>

⁷ Enchautegui, Maria et. al, *Effects of the CCDF Subsidy Program on the Employment Outcomes of Low Income Mothers*, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (December 2016), <https://aspe.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/private/pdf/253961/EffectsCCSubsidiesMaternalLFPTechnical.pdf>.

In fact, a recent report by the United States Census Bureau found that child care subsidies help working mothers stay in the labor force and narrow the pay gap between spouses.⁸ The child care crisis is an economic issue that disproportionately affects women, and studies show that women have been nearly three times as likely as men to not work outside the home over the past few years because of child care demands.⁹ By strengthening CCDBG, we can expand the workforce and better support working women.

Provide at least \$974.8 Million for IDEA Grants for Infants and Families and \$683.5 million for IDEA Preschool Grants. We also urge you to provide increased funds for the two critical early childhood programs under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Together, IDEA Grants for Infants and Families (Part C of IDEA) and IDEA Preschool Grants (Part B, Section 619 of IDEA) deliver comprehensive services for children with disabilities from birth through 5 years of age and their families. These programs serve more than one million children per year and benefit all states.¹⁰ Unfortunately, federal investments in both programs have failed to match increases in the number of children served as well as the cost of inflation. Consequently, both programs have experienced a significant erosion of funding over the last two decades.

High-quality early interventions in early care and education can produce a 13 percent per child, per year return on investment.¹¹ 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.

Members of Congress on both sides of the aisle and President Biden¹² have consistently demonstrated our commitment to expanding access to affordable, quality child care. The child care stabilization relief funds¹³ and historic increases to annual CCDBG funding provided much-needed lifelines to the child care industry. We urge you to again, in a bipartisan matter, expand these critical federal resources for affordable, high-quality child care and early childhood education.

Sincerely,

⁸ Gurrentz, Benjamin, *Child Care Subsidies Help Married Moms Continue Working, Bring Greater Pay Equity*, U.S. Census Bureau (Oct. 12, 2021), <https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2021/10/measuring-impact-of-child-care-subsidies-on-working-moms.html>.

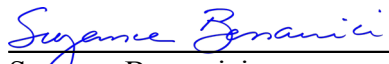
⁹ Ibid.

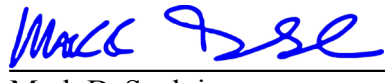
¹⁰ U.S. Department of Education, *43rd Annual Report to Congress on the Implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 2021* (Jan. 2022), <https://sites.ed.gov/idea/files/43rd-arc-for-idea.pdf>.


¹¹ Heckman, James, *Economist James J. Heckman: Early Education Packs a High Return on Investment*, Committee for Economic Development (March 6, 2017), <https://www.ced.org/blog/entry/comprehensive-birth-to-age-five-early-childhood-education-has-the-highest-r>.


¹² Koch, Christina, *Funding for Child Care and Early Learning in President Biden's FY2024 Budget*, Child Care Aware of America®, March 24, 2023, <https://info.childcareaware.org/blog/presidentsbudgetforchildcare>.


¹³ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, *COVID Investments in Child Care: Supporting Children, Families, and Providers*, June 1, 2023, <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/occ/infographic/covid-investments-child-care-supporting-children-families-and-providers>.



Suzanne Bonamici
Member of Congress

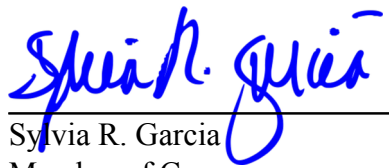

Mark DeSaulnier
Member of Congress

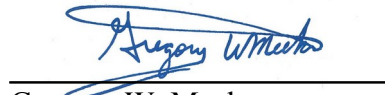

Marilyn Strickland
Member of Congress

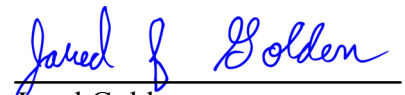

Jamaal Bowman, Ed.D.
Member of Congress



Donald Norcross
Member of Congress

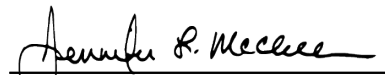

Norma J. Torres
Member of Congress



Sylvia R. Garcia
Member of Congress

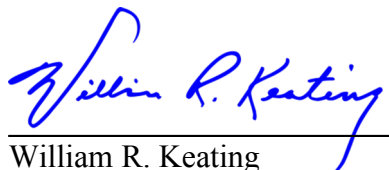

Gregory W. Meeks
Member of Congress

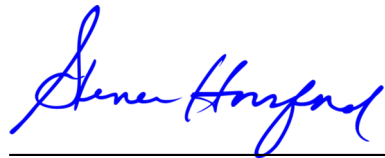

Jared Golden
Member of Congress


Donald S. Beyer Jr.
Member of Congress

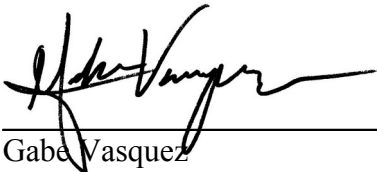

Jennifer L. McClellan
Member of Congress


Lucy McBath
Member of Congress


William R. Keating
Member of Congress


Steven Horsford
Member of Congress


Lizzie Fletcher
Member of Congress



Gabe Vasquez
Member of Congress



Chrissy Houlahan
Member of Congress



Raul Ruiz, M.D.
Member of Congress



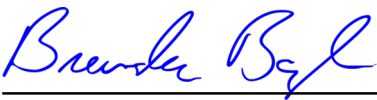
Jason Crow
Member of Congress



Dina Titus
Member of Congress



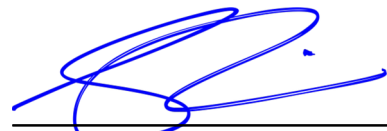
Veronica Escobar
Member of Congress



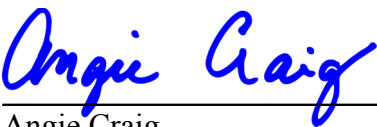
Brendan F. Boyle
Member of Congress



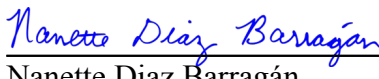
John Garamendi
Member of Congress



Sharice L. Davids
Member of Congress



Angie Craig
Member of Congress



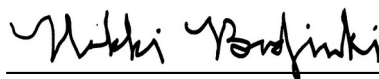
Nanette Diaz Barragán
Member of Congress



Grace F. Napolitano
Member of Congress



Lisa Blunt Rochester
Member of Congress



Nikki Budzinski
Member of Congress



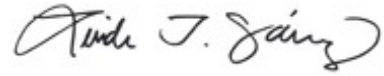
Andy Kim
Member of Congress



Kevin Mullin
Member of Congress



Debbie Dingell
Member of Congress



Linda T. Sánchez
Member of Congress



Ilhan Omar
Member of Congress



Joaquin Castro
Member of Congress



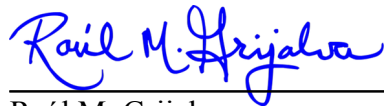
Jimmy Panetta
Member of Congress



Nikema Williams
Member of Congress



Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress



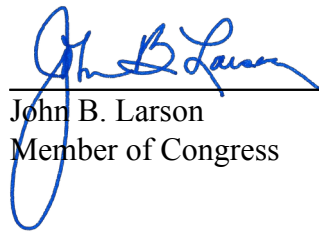
Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress



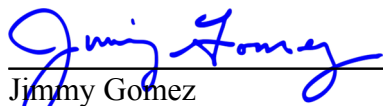
Gregorio Kilili Camacho
Sablan
Member of Congress



Colin Z. Allred
Member of Congress



John B. Larson
Member of Congress



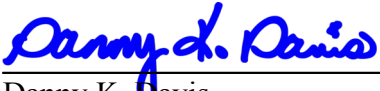
Jimmy Gomez
Member of Congress



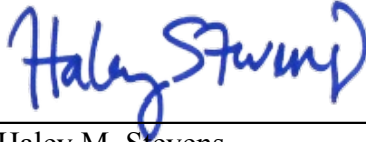
Andrea Salinas
Member of Congress



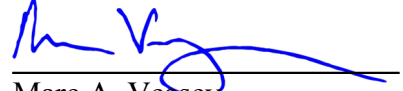
Stephen F. Lynch
Member of Congress



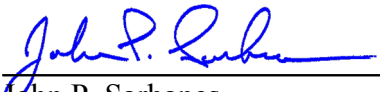
Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress



Haley M. Stevens
Member of Congress



Marc A. Veasey
Member of Congress



John P. Sarbanes
Member of Congress



Dean Phillips
Member of Congress



Bill Foster
Member of Congress



Jim Himes
Member of Congress



Val Hoyle
Member of Congress



Joyce Beatty
Member of Congress



Steve Cohen
Member of Congress



Jahana Hayes
Member of Congress



Jerrold Nadler
Member of Congress



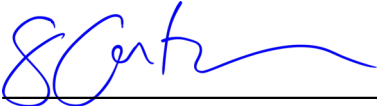
Eric Swalwell
Member of Congress



Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress



Chris Pappas
Member of Congress



Sean Casten
Member of Congress



Julia Brownley
Member of Congress



Mike Levin
Member of Congress



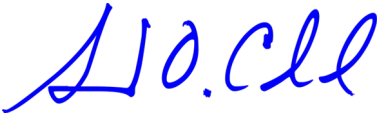
Seth Moulton
Member of Congress



Brittany Pettersen
Member of Congress



Daniel T. Kildee
Member of Congress



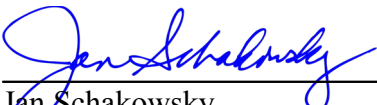
Salud Carbajal
Member of Congress



Raja Krishnamoorthi
Member of Congress



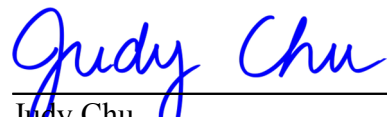
Cori Bush
Member of Congress



Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress



Donald M. Payne, Jr.
Member of Congress



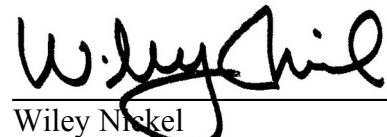
Judy Chu
Member of Congress



Sydney Kamlager-Dove
Member of Congress



Lori Trahan
Member of Congress




Wiley Nickel
Member of Congress



Marie Gluesenkamp Perez
Member of Congress



Rashida Tlaib
Member of Congress



Jared Huffman
Member of Congress



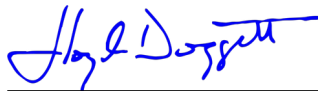
Dan Goldman
Member of Congress



Ann McLane Kuster
Member of Congress



Richard E. Neal
Member of Congress



Lloyd Doggett
Member of Congress



Pramila Jayapal
Member of Congress



Robin L. Kelly
Member of Congress



Melanie Stansbury
Member of Congress



David Scott
Member of Congress



Katie Porter
Member of Congress



Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress



Ayanna Pressley
Member of Congress



Suzan K. DelBene
Member of Congress



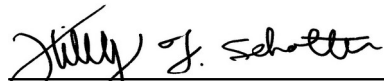
Diana DeGette
Member of Congress



Shontel M. Brown
Member of Congress



Chris Deluzio
Member of Congress



Hillary J. Scholten
Member of Congress



Bradley Scott Schneider
Member of Congress



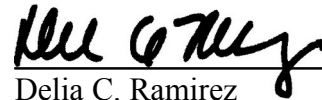
Tony Cárdenas
Member of Congress



Stacey E. Plaskett
Member of Congress



James P. McGovern
Member of Congress



Delia C. Ramirez
Member of Congress



Joe Neguse
Member of Congress



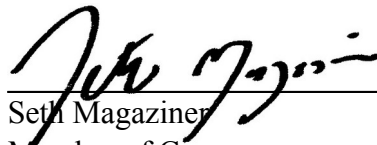
Jared Moskowitz
Member of Congress



Frank Pallone, Jr.
Member of Congress



Terri A. Sewell
Member of Congress



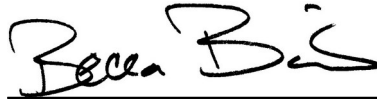
Seth Magaziner
Member of Congress



Teresa Leger Fernández
Member of Congress
Vice Chair, Democratic
Women's Caucus



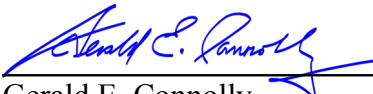
Zoe Lofgren
Member of Congress



Becca Balint
Member of Congress



Eric Sorensen
Member of Congress



Gerald E. Connolly
Member of Congress



Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



Josh Gottheimer
Member of Congress



Sara Jacobs
Member of Congress



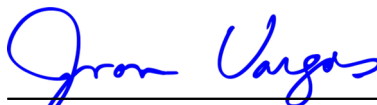
Kim Schrier, M.D.
Member of Congress



Donald G. Davis
Member of Congress



Vicente Gonzalez
Member of Congress



Juan Vargas
Member of Congress



Bill Pascrell, Jr.
Member of Congress



Paul D. Tonko
Member of Congress



Robert Garcia
Member of Congress



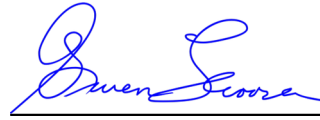
Jesús G. "Chuy" García
Member of Congress



Scott H. Peters
Member of Congress



Patrick K. Ryan
Member of Congress



Gwen S. Moore
Member of Congress



Morgan McGarvey
Member of Congress



Adam Smith
Member of Congress



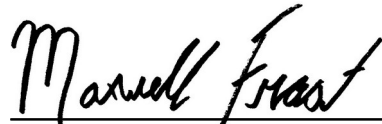
Gabe Amo
Member of Congress



Madeleine Dean
Member of Congress



Mary Gay Scanlon
Member of Congress



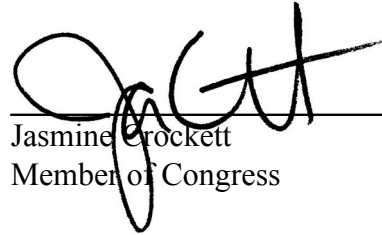
Maxwell Alejandro Frost
Member of Congress



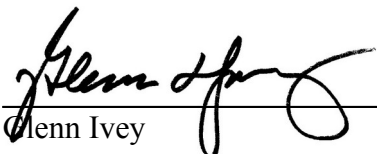
Mikie Sherrill
Member of Congress



Dwight Evans
Member of Congress



Jasmine Crockett
Member of Congress



Glenn Ivey
Member of Congress



Summer Lee
Member of Congress



Al Green
Member of Congress
Scion of the Enslaved
Africans -
Sacrificed to Make America
Great

Nydia M. Velázquez
Member of Congress

Mark Takano
Member of Congress

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

Jeff Jackson
Member of Congress

André Carson
Member of Congress

Greg Casar
Member of Congress

Ruben Gallego
Member of Congress

Ritchie Torres
Member of Congress

Kweisi Mfume
Member of Congress

Jim Tokuda
Member of Congress

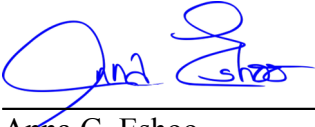
Kathy Castor
Member of Congress

Ami Bera, M.D.
Member of Congress

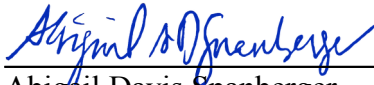
Joe Courtney
Member of Congress

Ted W. Lieu
Member of Congress

Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez
Member of Congress



Anna G. Eshoo
Member of Congress



Abigail Davis Spanberger
Member of Congress



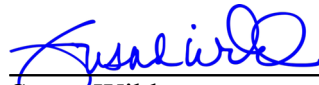
Rick Larsen
Member of Congress



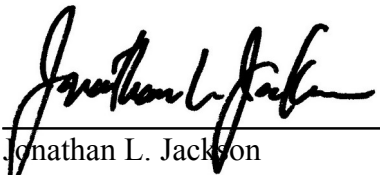
Elissa Slotkin
Member of Congress



Doris Matsui
Member of Congress



Susan Wild
Member of Congress



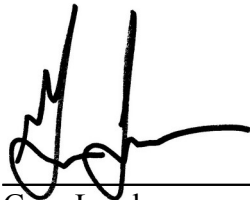
Jonathan L. Jackson
Member of Congress



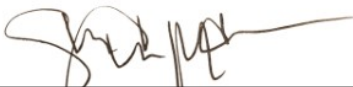
Emanuel Cleaver, II
Member of Congress



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



Greg Landsman
Member of Congress



Sheila Cherfilus-McCormick
Member of Congress