

APPROPRIATIONS: FY2021 Dear Colleague Letters

The appropriations process is an important time for legislators to determine their priorities for the next fiscal year. Congress uses this process to allocate funding for federal programs, activities and priorities. For the past several years, amid a myriad of competing priorities and limited funds, federal early learning and care programs have seen historic appropriations increases through bipartisan Congressional spending bills.

On Capitol Hill, "Dear Colleague" letters are a key way for lawmakers to convey and generate support for these programs among their colleagues. Lawmakers collaborate to show appropriators the breadth and depth of support on Capitol Hill, and often make specific requests related to program funding levels.

This year, 6 separate "Dear Colleague" letters were circulated related to the federal early learning and care programs. Notably, there was a steady increase in the number of lawmakers who signed on to letters calling for increased support to early learning programs, including 47 Republicans - a big increase over last year. This year also saw a new bipartisan letter supporting additional funding for CCDBG and quality early childhood education in the IDEA. What's more, the Preschool Development Grant Dear Colleague letter had over 100 signers, an increase of 25 members since last year.

Democratic Senate Dear Colleague Letter Supporting Funding for Early Learning and Care in FY2021

A letter to Chairman Roy Blunt and Ranking Member Senator Patty Murray urging the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee to increase funding to the several federal learning programs. The details of the funding increases requested is as follows:

- An additional \$5 billion for the Child Care and Development Block Grant
- An additional \$1.3 billion for Head Start
- An additional \$787.3 million for early childhood services provided through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)
- An additional \$125 million for the Preschool Development Grants Birth through Five (PDG B-5) program

This letter is led by Senators Robert Casey (D-PA), Tina Smith (D-MN), and Mazie Hirono (D-HI) and signed by 42 Democrats.

Bipartisan House Dear Colleague Letter Supporting PDG B-5 in FY2021

A letter to Chairwoman Rosa DeLauro and Ranking Member Tom Cole urging the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee to fund the Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five (PDG B-5) program at a level of at least \$400 million in the Fiscal Year 2021 appropriations bill. This letter is led by Representatives Joaquin Castro (D-TX) & John Katko (R-NY) signed by 102 Democrats & 4 Republicans.

Bipartisan House Dear Colleague Letter Supporting CCDBG in FY2021

A letter to Chairwoman Rosa DeLauro and Ranking Member Tom Cole urging the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee to provide robust funding for the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) in the Fiscal Year 2021 appropriations bill. This letter is led by Representatives Rodney Davis (R-IL), Steve Stivers (R-OH) and Pete Stauber (R-MN) and signed by seven Democrats and 16 Republicans .

Bipartisan House Dear Colleague Letter Supporting CCDBG and IDEA in FY2021

A letter to Chairwoman Rosa DeLauro and Ranking Member Tom Cole urging the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee to fund the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) with an additional \$4.5 billion and provide increased funds for Early Childhood Programs under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) with an additional \$497,800,000 in the Fiscal Year 2021 appropriations bill. This letter is led by Representatives Katherine Clark (D-MA), Marcia Fudge (D-OH), Mark DeSaulnier (D-CA), Donald Norcross (D-NJ), and Norma Torres (D-CA) and signed by 137 Democrats and one Republican.

Republican House Dear Colleague Letter Supporting Head Start in FY2021

A letter to Chairwoman Rosa DeLauro and Ranking Member Tom Cole urging the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee to fund Head Start at the highest possible level in the Fiscal Year 2021 appropriations bill. This letter is led by Representatives Steve Stivers (R-OH), Elise Stefanik (R-NY), Debbie Lesko (R-AZ) and Jackie Walorski (R-IN) and signed by 44 Republicans.

Bipartisan House Dear Colleague Letter Supporting Head Start in FY2021

A letter to Chairwoman Rosa DeLauro and Ranking Member Tom Cole urging the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee to fund Head Start at \$11,369,445,000 in the Fiscal Year 2021 appropriations bill, a \$756 million increase over FY20. This letter is led by Representatives Katherine Clark (D-MA) and Lauren Underwood (D-IL) and signed by 163 Democrats and two Republicans.

About First Five Years Fund

The first five years last forever. At First Five Years Fund, we work to protect, prioritize, and build bipartisan support for quality child care and early learning programs at the federal level. Reliable, affordable, and high-quality early learning and child care can be transformative, not only enhancing a child's prospects for a brighter future but also bolstering working parents and fostering economic stability nationwide. Join us at www.ffyf.org.