

APPROPRIATIONS: FY2023 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, a record 8 separate “Dear Colleague” letters were circulated in support of increased funding for the various federal early learning and care programs. Some notable statistics include:

- 205 Members of Congress called for increased funding for federal early childhood education and care programs including 177 Democrats and 28 Republicans.
- This year, 27 Freshmen members (23 members of the House and 4 Senators) signed onto FY23 appropriations letters relating to early learning and care.
- 34 House members and 5 Senators signed onto funding letters for the first time.
- Two new letters were circulated for signatures in the Senate, underscoring the importance of federal funding to critical early learning programs.

Senate

Democratic Senate Dear Colleague Letter Supporting federal early learning and care programs in FY2023

- Letter to Chairwoman Patty Murray and Ranking Member Roy Blunt calling for; An additional \$6.23B for the Child Care and Development Block Grant (a total of \$12.4B);
- An additional \$4.4B for Head Start (total of \$15.4B), including \$596M for a cost-of-living adjustment to support the Head Start and Early Head Start workforce, \$262M for quality improvement, including facilities, \$2.5M for workforce compensation realignment, \$1M for the expansion of Early Head Start and Early Care Partnerships and \$10M to help develop the most effective and appropriate staff for American Indian/Alaska Native programs;
- An additional \$777.7M for early childhood services provided through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), including an additional \$503.7M for Part C (a total of \$1B) and an additional \$274M for Part B, Section 619 programs (a total of \$708.1M); and
- An additional \$228 million for the Preschool Development Grants Birth through Five (PDG B-5) program (a total of \$518 million).
- Led by Senators Bob Casey, Tina Smith, and Mazie Hirono
- Signed by 44 Democrats

Republican Senate Dear Colleague Letter Supporting the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) in FY2023

- Letter to Chairwoman Patty Murray and Ranking Member Roy Blunt calling for CCDBG to be put on a path to double funding over the next five years.
- Led by Senator Richard Burr
- Signed by 5 Republicans

Democratic Senate Dear Colleague Letter Supporting Head Start in FY2023

- Letter to Chairwoman Patty Murray and Ranking Member Roy Blunt calling for \$15.4B in total funding for Head Start in FY 2023
- Led by Senator Ben Ray Luján
- Signed by 20 Democrats

House of Representatives

Bipartisan House Dear Colleague Letter Supporting Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five (PDG B-5) in FY2023

- 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 PDG B-5 program at a level of at least \$500M.
- Led by Representatives Joaquin Castro (D-TX) and John Katko (R-NY).
- Signed by 84 Democrats & 4 Republicans

Republican House Dear Colleague Letter Supporting Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) in FY2023

- 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 CCDBG.
- Led by Representatives Rodney Davis (R-IL) and Maria Salazar (R-FL).
- Signed by 15 Republicans

Democratic House Dear Colleague Letter Supporting CCDBG and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in FY2023

- Letter to Chairwoman Rosa DeLauro and Ranking Member Tom Cole urging the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee to double funding for CCDBG and provide increased funds for IDEA: \$932M in FY23 for IDEA Part C, an increase of \$209M over last year
- \$502.6M in FY23 for IDEA Part B
- Led by Representatives Katherine Clark (D-MA), Mark DeSaulnier (D-CA), Donald Norcross (D-NJ), Jamaal Bowman (D-NY), Marilyn Strickland (D-WA), and Norma Torres (D-CA) (led in FY21 by: Clark, Fudge, DeSaulnier, Norcross, and Torres)
- Signed by 133 Democrats

Democratic House Dear Colleague Letter Supporting Head Start in FY2023

- 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 \$15.4B to Head Start programs.
- Led by Representatives Katherine Clark (D-MA), Lauren Underwood (D-IL), and Joseph D. Morelle (D-NY)
- Signed by 172 Democrats

Republican House Dear Colleague Letter Supporting Head Start in FY2023

- 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 support to Head Start programs.
- Led by Representative Fred Keller (R-PA).
- Signed by 23 Republicans

Community Letter

The First Five Years Fund (FFYF) and a coalition of national early education advocacy organizations **wrote** to Congressional appropriators with a request for increased funding for existing federal early learning and care programs, including [CCDBG](#), [Head Start and Early Head Start](#), [IDEA](#), and [PDG B-5](#).

The letter reinforces the essential role of the federal early learning and care programs for millions of children and families, and highlights the significant unmet need. You can read the letter [here](#).

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.