

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 13, 2018

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

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

Dear Chairman Blunt and Ranking Member Murray:

We request that as you weigh difficult budget choices for the Fiscal Year 2019 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 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part C (Grants for Infants and Families) and Part B Section 619 (Preschool Grants), including funding the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) at a level that, at a minimum, fulfills the \$5.8 billion increase included in the bi-partisan budget agreement for FY 2018 and FY 2019. 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.

Funding for early childhood 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.

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 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 as you weigh difficult budget choices, 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

Tina Smith
United States Senator



Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator



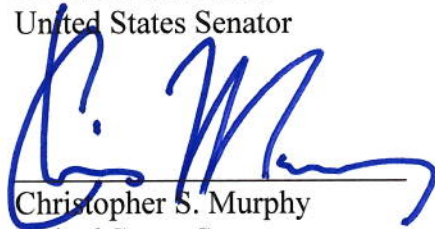
Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator



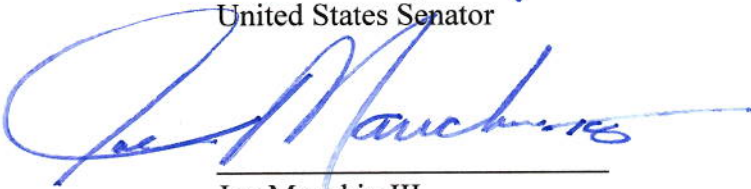
Richard Blumenthal
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Thomas R. Carper
United States Senator



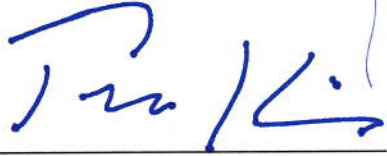
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United States Senator



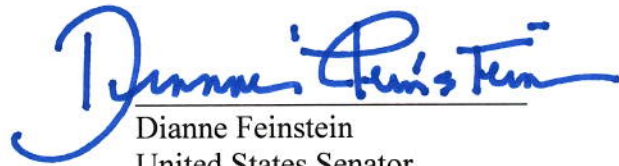
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Tammy Duckworth
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Tim Kaine
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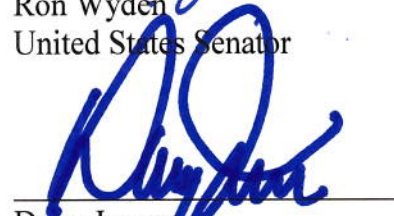
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Ron Wyden
United States Senator



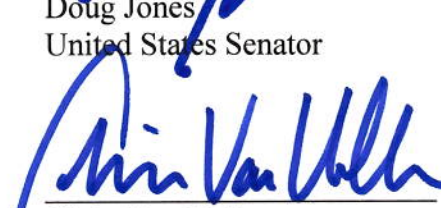
Sheldon Whitehouse
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Doug Jones
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Brian Schatz
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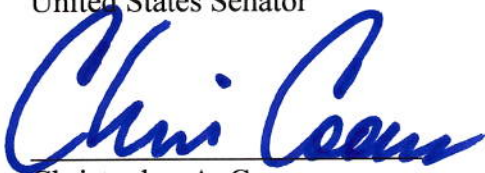
Chris Van Hollen
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Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



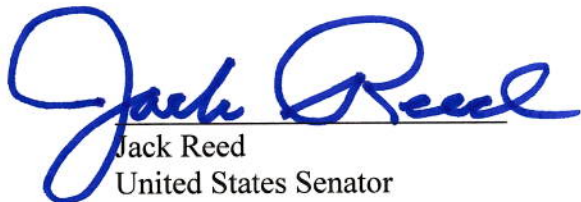
Debbie Stabenow
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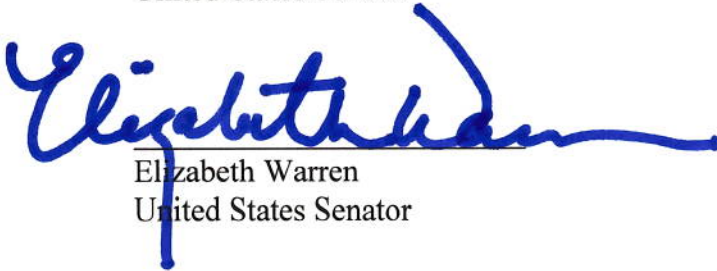
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Elizabeth Warren
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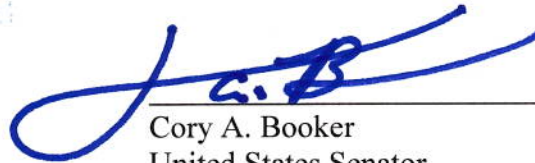
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United States Senator



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United States Senator



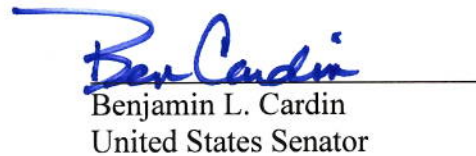
Martin Heinrich
United States Senator



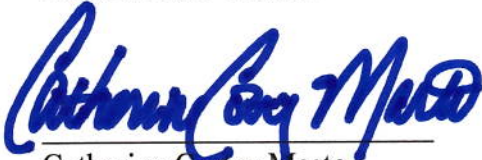
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United States Senator



Joe Donnelly
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Catherine Cortez Masto
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Gary C. Peters
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