

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 4, 2014

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

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

Dear Chairman Harkin and Ranking Member Moran:

We write to request that as you weigh difficult budget choices and finalize the Fiscal Year 2015 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 and early intervention services provided through Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part C (Grants for Infants and Families). 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 education programs represents one of our greatest opportunities for a significant return on federal investments. 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. Families receive childcare assistance for only one in six eligible children; less than half of eligible preschool-aged children are able to participate in Head Start; and only four 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 systems.

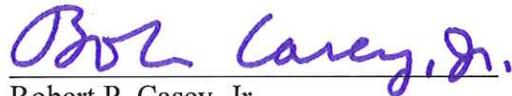
Improving the long-term outcomes of our nation's most vulnerable children is crucial to the future health of our economy. Investing in high-quality early education is a proven strategy for achieving this goal. We therefore ask that as you weigh difficult budget choices, you support robust funding for the Child Care and Development Block Grant, Head Start, and Early Head Start to ensure that children and families continue to have access to affordable early care and education options and States can continue to work towards improving the quality of their early

childhood education systems so that all children are able to reap the benefits of a high-quality early education. We also ask that you continue to support robust funding for Part C of IDEA, which supports critical early intervention services for infants and toddlers. Thank you for your consideration.

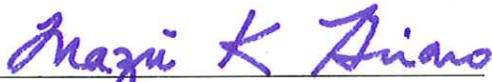
Sincerely,



Al Franken
United States Senator



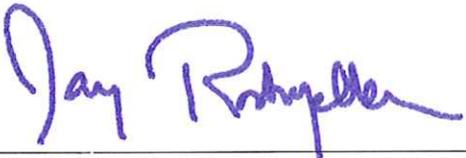
Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator



Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator



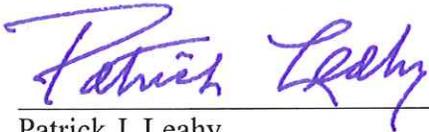
Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator



John D. Rockefeller IV
United States Senator



Carl Levin
United States Senator



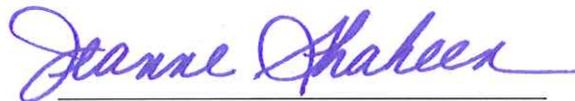
Patrick J. Leahy
United States Senator



Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator



Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator



Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator



Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator



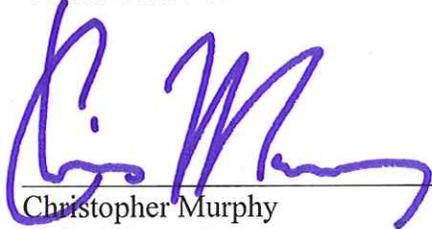
Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



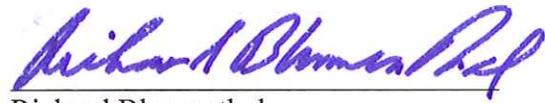
Robert Menendez
United States Senator



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



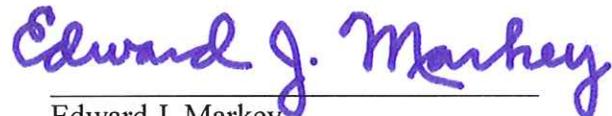
Christopher Murphy
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



Barbara Boxer
United States Senator



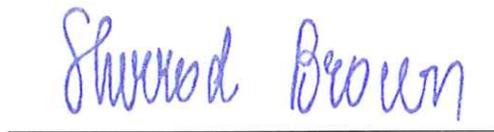
Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator



Kirsten E. Gillibrand
United States Senator



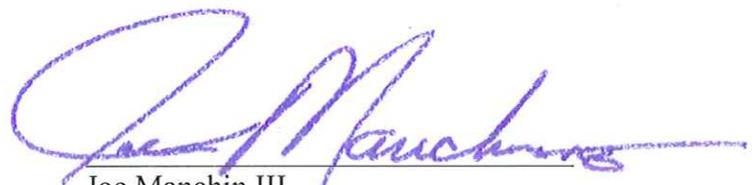
Sherrod Brown
United States Senator



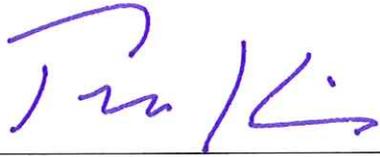
Jeff Merkley
United States Senator



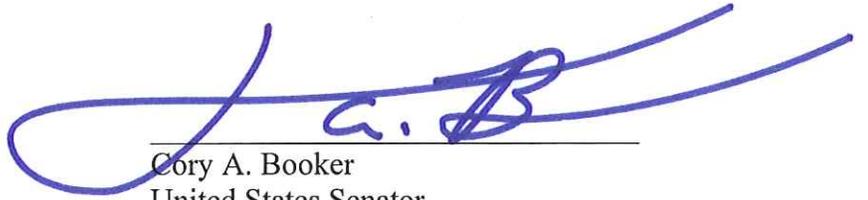
Jack Reed
United States Senator



Joe Manchin III
United States Senator



Tim Kaine
United States Senator



Cory A. Booker
United States Senator



Martin Heinrich
United States Senator



Brian Schatz
United States Senator



Bernard Sanders
United States Senator



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



Tim Johnson
United States Senator