

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

April 27, 2022

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Chairwoman
House Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education, and Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tom Cole
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education, and Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman DeLauro and Ranking Member Cole:

As you consider Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education appropriations legislation, we urge you to prioritize funding for Head Start—which includes Early Head Start, American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start, and Migrant and Seasonal Head Start. Specifically, we request at least \$15.4 billion for Head Start in FY 2023, a \$4.4 billion increase over FY 2022 enacted. This increase in funding will support a realistic cost-of-living adjustment, improved workforce compensation, add quality improvement funds (QIF) which can be used to make facility improvements and enhancements to classroom environments, and expand the Tribal Colleges and Universities-Head Start Partnership Program. In addition, this request includes funding for Early Head Start expansion and Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships.

As you know, Head Start and Early Head Start programs offer education, health, and nutrition services to children from at-risk backgrounds—those living in poverty, in foster care, or experiencing homelessness—as well as employment and educational support to their parents. Increased funding for Head Start is a wise, cost-effective investment in families and local communities that ultimately leads to greater prosperity for future generations. Research has repeatedly demonstrated that high-quality early childhood education programs generate a significant return on investment, and that the advantages of Head Start can last a lifetime.

Throughout the course of this pandemic, we have seen a remarkable level of effort from dedicated Head Start staff to maintain quality programming, support in-home and in-person early education, modify classrooms and procedures to create safe learning environments, and provide rigorous sanitation and screening to protect children, workers, and families. Head Start programs have proven to be resilient, and as children and families stabilize and build trajectories toward success, we must invest in Head Start's proven, crisis-tested work.

In FY 2023, Head Start will strain to retain qualified staff as programs struggle to pay competitive wages and match the benefits provided by comparable jobs. Strong outcomes for children and families receiving Head Start services rely on well-qualified staff, and well-qualified staff should be properly compensated. Yet compensation for the early childhood workforce, including Head Start, ranks in the lowest 10 percent of professions, resulting in unprecedented turnover of Head Start staff and threatening the stability and ability of Head Start programs to properly serve a maximum number of children. The FY 2023 request includes a

\$596 million cost-of-living-adjustment to help programs keep pace, and \$2.5 billion to improve the compensation of Head Start staff to help attract and retain a well-qualified workforce.


The physical environment of an early education program is also central to providing a safe, clean, and stimulating early education experience that promotes healthy child outcomes. Investing in facilities and supporting high-quality physical environments can reduce exposure to noise pollution, toxins in air and water, and other factors that negatively affect development. In order to ensure that the physical environments of Head Start programs are conducive to providing effective program services to children and families, this request includes \$262 million in quality improvement funding (QIF) which can be invested in facility improvements, enhancements to classroom environments, and strengthening of transportation safety.

Additionally, the percentage of teachers in American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) Head Start programs with the access and resources to receive their Bachelor's degree lags significantly behind the overall percentage of Head Start teachers with Bachelor's degrees nationwide. To increase the number of qualified education staff working in AI/AN Head Start and Early Head Start programs, we ask for \$10 million to support Tribal Colleges and University Head Start (TCU-HS) Partnership Programs.

Finally, Early Head Start programs work alongside Head Start programs to provide comprehensive care and support for the unique needs of infants and toddlers as well as pregnant women. Early Head Start programs promote physical, cognitive, social, and emotional development of infants and toddlers that prepare these children for continued growth and development and eventual success in school and life. Currently, Early Head Start serves only 11 percent of eligible infants and toddlers. This dynamic prevents a continuum of care for our youngest learners and undermines quality. Recognizing that Early Head Start is an essential and growing component to ensuring that even our youngest learners can access high-quality care, this request includes \$1 billion for Early Head Start expansion and Early Head Start-Child Care partnerships, with grants awarded based on the unique needs of each community and its families.

Congress has addressed the unanticipated costs of COVID-19 for Head Start programs. These efforts have been a welcome reprieve that have been critical to maintaining safe services throughout the pandemic. Nevertheless, perennial issues remain that we look to address. For these reasons, we request that you make these necessary investments as outlined so that Head Start can continue to provide much-needed education, health, and economic development services to America's most vulnerable children and families.

Sincerely,



Katherine M. Clark
Member of Congress



Lauren Underwood
Member of Congress



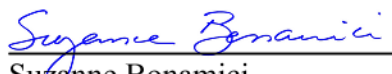
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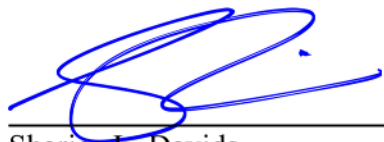
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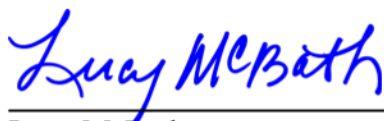
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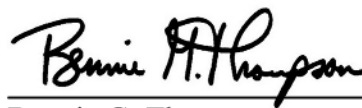
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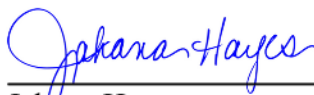
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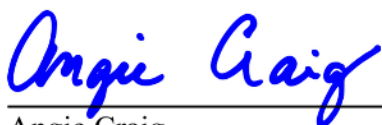
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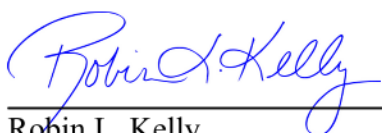
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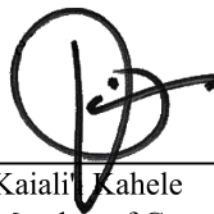
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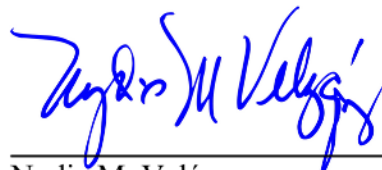
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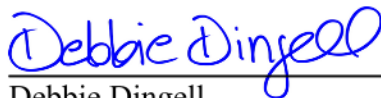
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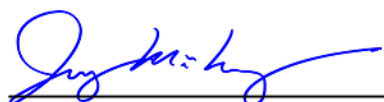
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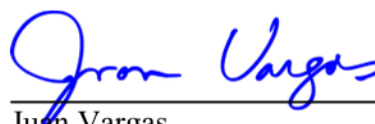
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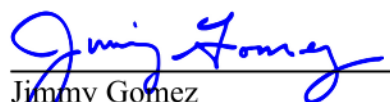
Nikema Williams
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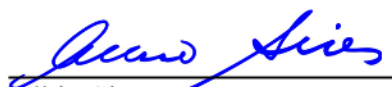
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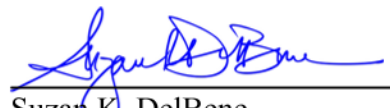
Albio Sires
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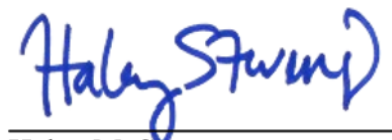
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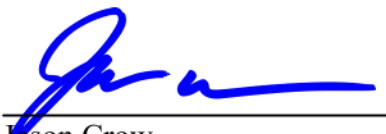
Joaquin Castro
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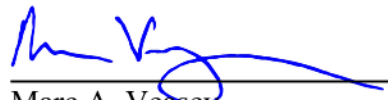
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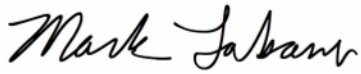
Frank Pallone, Jr.
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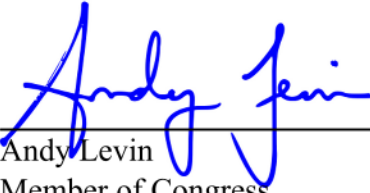
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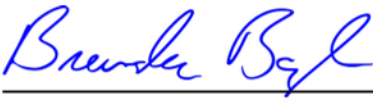
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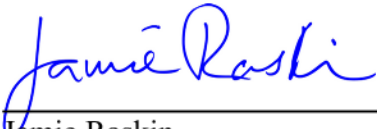
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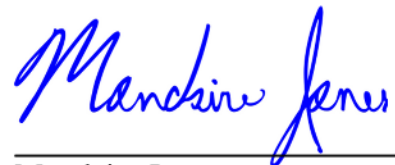
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Tony Cárdenas
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Jackie Speier
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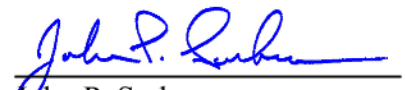
Eleanor Holmes Norton
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Rashida Tlaib
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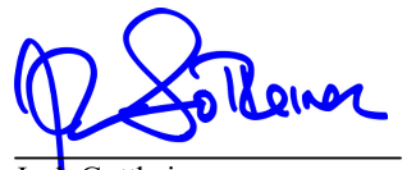
Ruben Gallego
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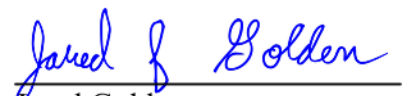
John Garamendi
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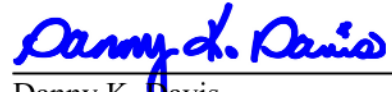
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Madeleine Dean
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Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
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Troy Carter
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G.K. Butterfield
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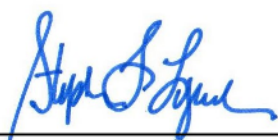
Veronica Escobar
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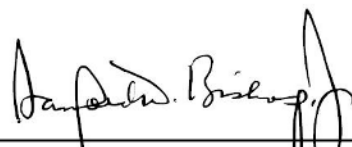
Ayanna Pressley
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Elissa Slotkin
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Stephen F. Lynch
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Sanford D. Bishop, Jr.
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Colin Z. Allred
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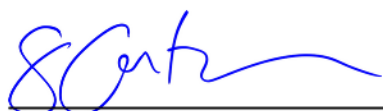
Elaine G. Luria
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Mike Rogers
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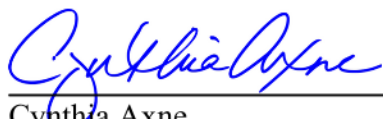
Diana DeGette
Member of Congress



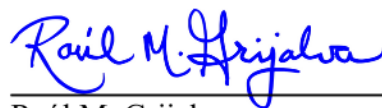
Sean Casten
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Cynthia Axne
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Linda T. Sánchez
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André Carson
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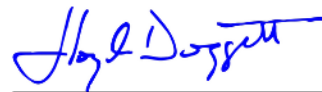
Jim Cooper
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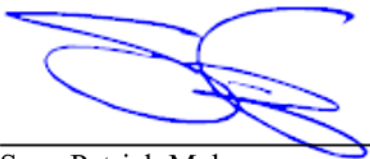
Pramila Jayapal
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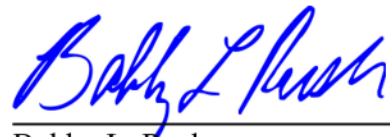
J. Luis Correa
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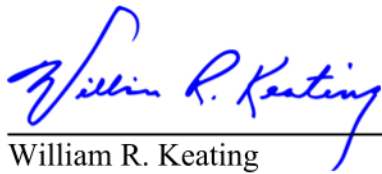
Lloyd Doggett
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Sean Patrick Maloney
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Bobby L. Rush
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William R. Keating
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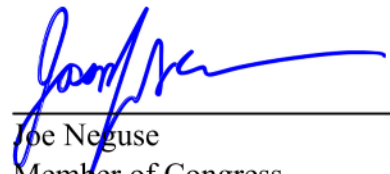
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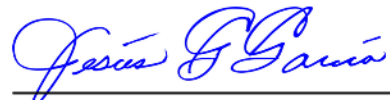
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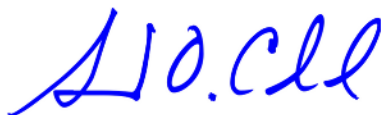
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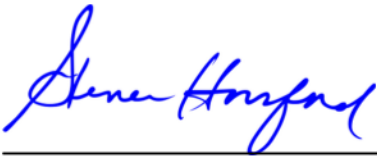
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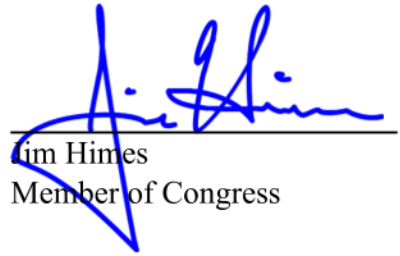
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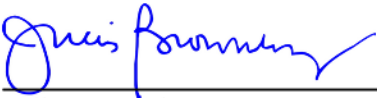
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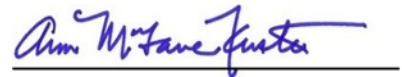
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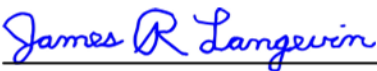
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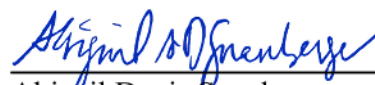
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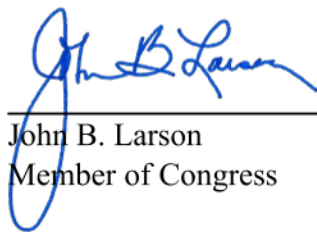
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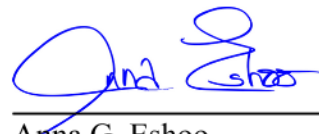
Ilhan Omar
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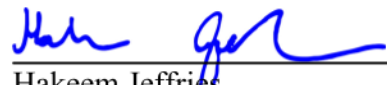
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Member of Congress



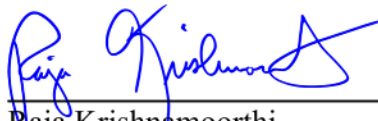
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Hakeem Jeffries
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Raja Krishnamoorthi
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