

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 25, 2022

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

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

Dear Chair Murray and Ranking Member Blunt:

We request that as you weigh difficult budget choices for the Fiscal Year 2023 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 the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part C (Grants for Infants and Families) and Part B Section 619 (Preschool Grants). 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.

Accordingly, we specifically request that the FY2023 appropriations bill provide:

- An additional \$6.23 billion for the Child Care and Development Block Grant (a total of \$12.4 billion);
- An additional \$4.4 billion for Head Start (total of \$15.4 billion), including \$596 million for a cost-of-living adjustment to support the Head Start and Early Head Start workforce, \$262 million for quality improvement, including facilities, \$2.5 billion for workforce compensation realignment, \$1 billion for the expansion of Early Head Start and Early Care Partnerships and \$10 million to help develop the most effective and appropriate staff for American Indian/Alaska Native programs;
- An additional \$777.7 million for early childhood services provided through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), including an additional \$503.7 million for Part C (a total of \$1 billion) and an additional \$274 million for Part B, Section 619 programs (a total of \$708.1 million); and
- An additional \$228 million for the Preschool Development Grants Birth through Five (PDG B-5) program (a total of \$518 million).

Funding for early 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 high-quality 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; furthermore, 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.

We are grateful for your work to provide historic child care investments in recent fiscal years. Yet, further investments are critical to fully address gaps in the affordability, availability and quality of child care. The pandemic shined a light on how critical child care is to our economy and the financial stability of families, as well as the precarious state of our child care infrastructure due to chronic underinvestment. The Child Care Stabilization Grants provided in the American Rescue Plan Act (P.L. 117-2) have helped child care centers remain open, maintain levels of services and ultimately help parents continue or return to work. In addition to these investments, there is substantial need for structural reform through robust and sustained funding through reconciliation in order to lower costs for families, raise wages for child care workers and improve the supply and quality of care for children. Underinvestment in child care not only limits opportunities for children, it drives economic hardship for working parents, especially mothers, child care workers, who are primarily women, and employers who struggle to recruit and retain workers. Child care is a crucial part of our economic infrastructure, and we need to treat it as such.

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 care and 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 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,



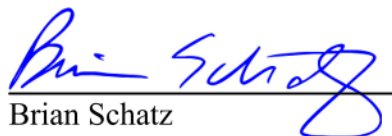
Robert P. Casey, Jr.
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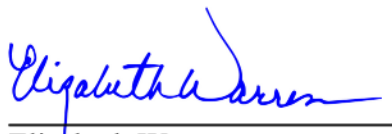
Margaret Wood Hassan
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Sheldon Whitehouse
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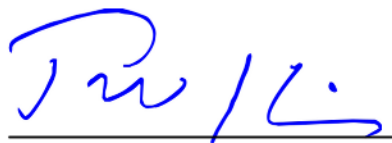
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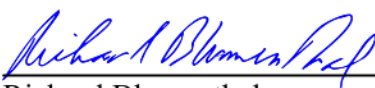
Tim Kaine
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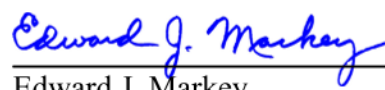
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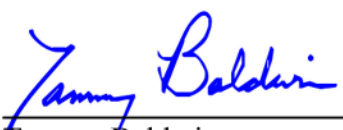
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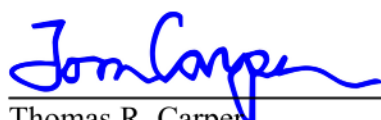
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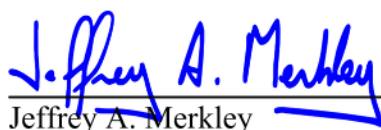
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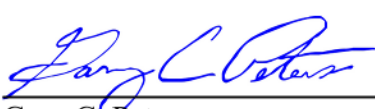
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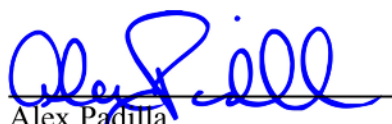
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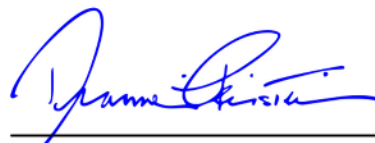
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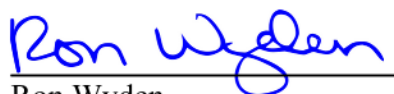
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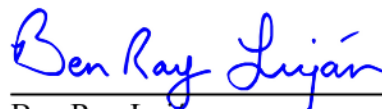
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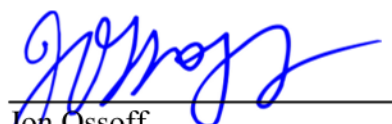
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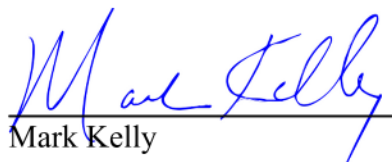
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