March 16, 2018

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chairman
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education
2358-B Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Cole and Ranking Member DeLauro:

As the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee develops its Fiscal Year 2019 appropriations bill, we respectfully urge you to fund the Preschool Development Grant program at $350 million. We appreciate the Subcommittee’s commitment to this program as demonstrated through the Fiscal Year 2018 appropriations process and hope to build on its success in the coming fiscal year.

When the Preschool Development Grant program first began in 2013, 36 states applied and, due to the limited availability of funds, the Department of Education awarded only 18 states with four-year grants to either expand or improve high quality, full-day preschool programming. These competitive grants made it possible for states like Alabama, Hawaii, Louisiana, and Virginia to bolster preschool programs for children and bring high-quality programming to communities across the country that lacked such access. To date, the grants have served more than 130,000 children.

We were pleased that Congress authorized Preschool Development Grants in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) at $250 million per fiscal year (P.L. 114-95). The inclusion of Preschool Development Grants in ESSA builds upon the solid body of research that says high-quality preschool improves school readiness and long-term academic success of children by supporting their academic and social-emotional skills. Support for this grant is an important step to fostering a globally competitive 21st century workforce. Under ESSA, all states are now eligible to apply for a Preschool Development Grant. However, we urge you to provide funding above the authorized amount so every state that meets the grant’s requirements can receive adequate funding.

We respectfully request that the Subcommittee fund this program at $350 million to help states develop comprehensive early learning systems that will serve children in high-need communities across the country.

Sincerely,
Joaquin Castro
Member of Congress

Robert C. "Bobby" Scott
Member of Congress

Sheila Jackson Lee
Member of Congress

Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress

Keith Ellison
Member of Congress

David N. Cicilline
Member of Congress

Bonnie Watson Coleman
Member of Congress

John Katko
Member of Congress

Mark DeSaulnier
Member of Congress

Jerry McNerney
Member of Congress

Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan
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Anthony G. Brown
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Lois Frankel
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Terri A. Sewell
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John Yarmuth  
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Jerrold Nadler  
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Juan Vargas  
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Steve Cohen  
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Albio Sires  
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Mark Takano  
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Peter Welch  
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Joe Courtney  
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Suzanne Bonamici  
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Yvette D. Clarke  
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Darren Soto  
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Donald M. Payne, Jr.  
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Elizabeth H. Esty  
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Member of Congress
James P. McGovern
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Kyrsen Sinema
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Al Green
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Debbie Wasserman Schultz
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Jared Polis
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A. Donald McEachin
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Alma S. Adams, Ph.D.
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Stephen E. Lynch
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Carolyn B. Maloney
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Ruben Gallego
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Thomas R. Suozzi
Member of Congress
Eleanor Holmes Norton  
Member of Congress

Jim Himes  
Member of Congress

Beto O’Rourke  
Member of Congress

John K. Delaney  
Member of Congress

Peter DeFazio  
Member of Congress

Tulsi Gabbard  
Member of Congress