

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 16, 2016

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Chairman
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, Education
& Related Agencies
U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, Education
& Related Agencies
U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee

Dear Chairman Blunt and Ranking Member Murray:

We write to request that you provide robust funding for the Statewide Family Engagement Centers (SFECs) grant program in the Senate's Fiscal Year 2017 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies (L-HHS) Appropriations bill. Investing in this program would support meaningful family engagement policies and programs to ensure that all students are on track to be career and college-ready.

The Statewide Family Engagement Centers (SFECs) grant program is one of the few non-categorical programs from No Child Left Behind (NCLB) that was maintained in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) (P.L. 114-95). Both the House of Representatives and the Senate recognized the vital role parent and family engagement plays in education by including the SFECs program as a standalone program in their respective bills. Formerly known as the Parental Information and Resource Centers under NCLB, the improved SFECs program will provide much needed technical assistance and partnership development for states and school districts to better support schools and educators in family engagement. This engagement will advance the academic and developmental progress of our nation's children and drive increases in student achievement and other positive outcomes.

Research has shown that family engagement in a child's education increases student achievement, improves attendance, reduces the dropout rate, and advances the emotional and physical well being of children. Students whose families are involved in their children's academic success attend school more regularly, earn better grades, enroll in more challenging academic programs, and have higher graduation rates. The Statewide Family Engagement Centers program will harness effective practices to help schools and districts implement systematic family engagement programs that build ties between the community, families, students, and schools.

We believe that an investment in SFECs and family engagement is important to ensuring not only that families are meaningfully supported and engaged in the education of their children, but that our nation's students are fully prepared for higher education, the workforce, and career opportunities in the 21st century. Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,



Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator



Jack Reed
United States Senator



Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator



Richard Burr
United States Senator



Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator



Thom Tillis
United States Senator



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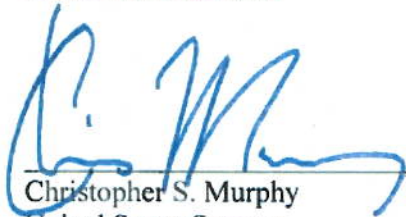
Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator



Sherrod Brown
United States Senator



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



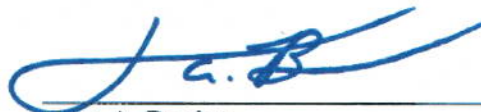
Christopher S. Murphy
United States Senator



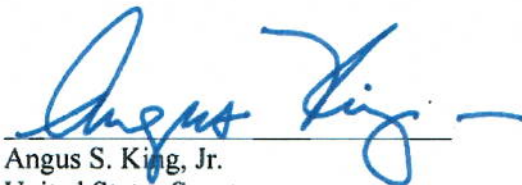
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United States Senator



Brian Schatz
United States Senator



Cory A. Booker
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United States Senator



Martin Heinrich
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