

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 10, 2012

Secretary Arne Duncan
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20202

Secretary Kathleen Sebelius
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Mr. Secretary and Madam Secretary,

We are strong supporters of your efforts to improve access to quality early learning programs, especially for low income children. As you know, the final Fiscal Year 2012 Appropriations Conference Report Statement of Managers included language supporting the inclusion of a strong early childhood education provision within the Race to the Top competition: "The conferees expect that the Secretary will include a robust early childhood education component in administering the Race to the Top competition."

In 2011, 35 states, D.C., and Puerto Rico applied for the Early Learning Challenge competition within Race to the Top. It is critical to continue the Early Learning Challenge, as implemented in 2011, to effectively promote improved outcomes for high-needs children through a coordinated statewide, state-led development of a quality system that supports all aspects of a child's early learning. Although only nine states won in the competition's first round, by completing the grant application, all applicants made major progress in developing a coordinated early learning plan across state agencies and programs.

We strongly support a second round of the Early Learning Challenge competition within Race to the Top to build on the work the applicants started and to encourage new states to improve their early childhood systems as well. The state-level Early Learning Challenge competition provides a critical opportunity to coordinate early learning systems in a way that can only happen at the state level.

We urge you to build on the success and enthusiasm of Round One by devoting a meaningful portion of the Fiscal Year 2012 Race to the Top appropriation toward Round Two of the state-level Early Learning Challenge.

Sincerely,



Mazie K. Hirono
MEMBER OF CONGRESS



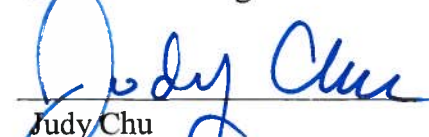
Danny K. Davis
MEMBER OF CONGRESS



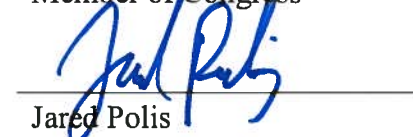
George Miller
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

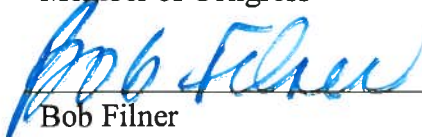
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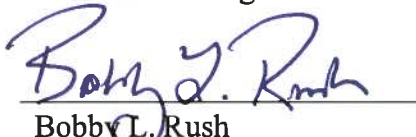

John Conyers
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Judy Chu
Member of Congress

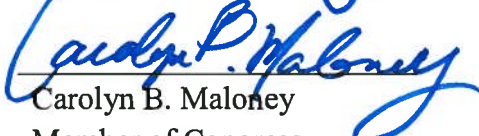

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Eleanor Holmes Norton
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David Cicilline
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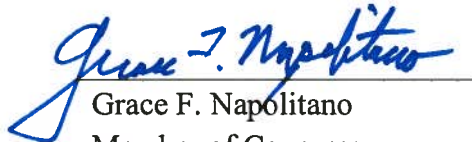
Maurice D. Hinchey
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Michael Fitzpatrick
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Michael Quigley
Member of Congress



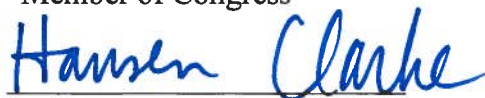
Grace F. Napolitano
Member of Congress



David E. Price
Member of Congress



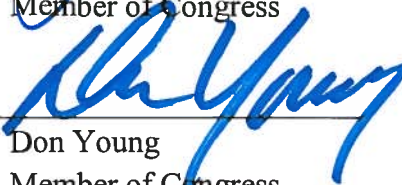
Melvin L. Watt
Member of Congress



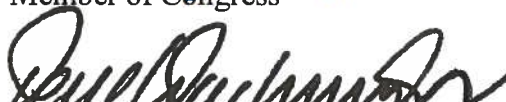
Hansen Clarke
Member of Congress



John Garamendi
Member of Congress



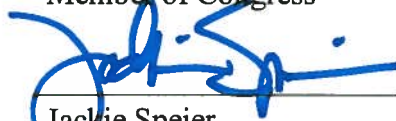
Don Young
Member of Congress



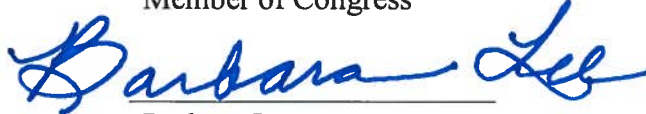
Jesse L. Jackson
Member of Congress



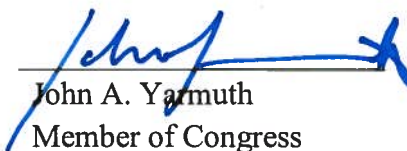
Rush D. Holt
Member of Congress



Jackie Speier
Member of Congress



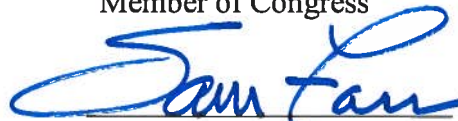
Barbara Lee
Member of Congress



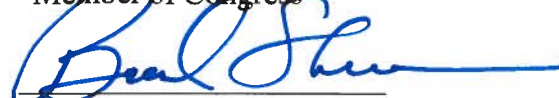
John A. Yarmuth
Member of Congress



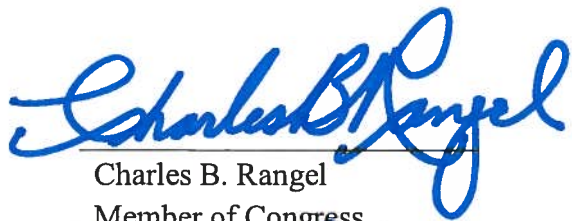
Pedro Pierluisi
Member of Congress



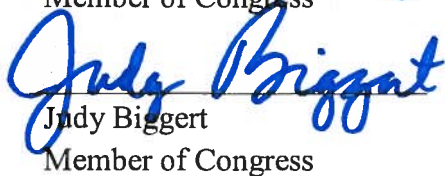
Sam Farr
Member of Congress



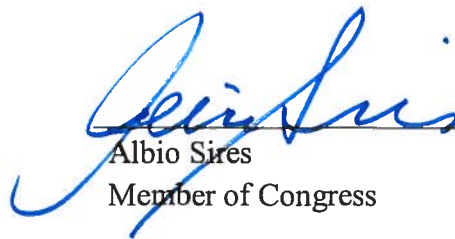
Brad Sherman
Member of Congress

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Charles B. Rangel".

Charles B. Rangel
Member of Congress

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Judy Biggert".

Judy Biggert
Member of Congress

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Albio Sires".

Albio Sires
Member of Congress