

March 12, 2018

Senator Thad Cochran
Chair, Senate Appropriations Committee
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Representative Rodney P. Frelinghuysen
Chair, House Appropriations Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Senator Patrick Leahy
Ranking Member, Senate Appropriations
Committee
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Representative Nita Lowey
Ranking Member, House Appropriations
Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Senator Roy Blunt
Chair, Senate LHHS Appropriations
Subcommittee
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Representative Tom Cole
Chair, House LHHS Appropriations
Subcommittee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Senator Patty Murray
Ranking Member, Senate LHHS
Appropriations Subcommittee
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Representative Rosa DeLauro
Ranking member, House LHHS
Appropriations Subcommittee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Member of Congress:

On behalf of the undersigned organizations representing our nation's public schools and educators, and the students they serve, we write to express our priorities for FY2018 Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations. In light of the recent budget agreement to raise spending caps, we urge Congress to make needed increased investments in education programs as FY2018 Omnibus work wraps up. In FY2018 and beyond, we urge you to prioritize critical programs that promote equity and support students most in need – Title I, IDEA, and Title II - to help ensure that all students have access to a high-quality education.

In this first full year of implementing the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) - enacted with broad, bipartisan support - Congress must prioritize investment that provides states and local school districts with adequate funding. Congress' funding choices reflect its priorities for the nation. Unfortunately, many in Congress have not shared the view of educators in recent years as

non-defense discretionary (NDD) spending in 2017 was 13 percent lower than it was in 2010, when adjusted for inflation. Furthermore, NDD spending (education, health care, job training) as a percentage of our nation's GDP is at a 40-year low, according to the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities.

Spending for education programs is at historically low levels. Title I funding per student is 15 percent less than it was in 2010. Title I provides supplemental education funding, especially in high-poverty areas. It also provides the foundation for the accountability system under ESSA. The federal share of IDEA funding has dropped from 17 percent in 2010 to 15 percent in 2018 - well below the 40 percent share that was promised by Congress. Title II, Part A funding is 30 percent less under the 2018 Senate Committee bill and completely eliminated in the House bill. Title II is critical to reducing class-size and providing educators professional development in the nation's highest-poverty districts.

Deep funding cuts to education do not align with ESSA's empowerment of parents, educators, and leaders at the state and local level to ensure that all students have access to well-resourced and high-performing neighborhood public schools. We urge Congress to continue the bipartisan work done to raise spending caps and prioritize investing in public education, especially for students most in need, in the final FY2018 omnibus bill.

Sincerely,

AASA: The School Superintendents Association
National Association of Elementary School Principals
National Association of Secondary School Principals
National Education Association
National PTA
National School Boards Association

Cc: Members of the Senate and House Appropriations Committees