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## Arizona State Senate

The Honorable Janice K. Brewer  
Governor, State of Arizona  
1700 W. Washington St.  
Phoenix, AZ 85007

May 26, 2010

Dear Governor Brewer,

I am writing to you today to offer my support for Arizona's application for round two of federal Race to the Top (RTTT) funding. At this moment, Arizona is at a crossroads in terms of its educational and economic policies. The actions taken in the coming months will have a profound and lasting impact on what type of economy Arizona is to have for perhaps decades to come. An infusion of federal RTTT funding will have a decisive positive impact on that outcome.

Arizona has already started along the path that President Obama has laid out for improving education in the United States. We were among the first states to establish a statewide school accountability system, and our statewide data system was a national leader at the time it was created. Our state universities are committed to developing high-quality teacher professional development and mentoring and induction programs. However, the economic downturn has limited our ability to commit significant resources to retooling these programs and others for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The climate in Arizona is ripe for change. Recently, voters in Arizona approved a sales tax increase based largely on the premise that it would prevent further cuts to K-12 education. The people understand that the key to a brighter, more economically diverse future lies in building a quality P-20 education system. A vote of confidence by the department of education via a RTTT funding award would continue that momentum and let the voters know that their confidence was not misplaced.

Of particular concern to us as Democrats, who in Arizona represent the vast majority of our state's Hispanic and Native American population, is the promise of equitable access to highly qualified teachers that RTTT funding brings. A great many of Arizona's persistently low performing schools are located on Native lands or in areas populated largely by Latinos, and it is very difficult to attract and retain enough quality teachers in the more remote areas of the state. Given the trends in the demographics of the Southwestern United States, continuing this trend would result in nothing short of an economic catastrophe for our state.

Arizona is ready to act, but we cannot do it alone. We would welcome the department's support in our efforts to improve the quality of life in Arizona, and would endeavor to repay that trust with a demonstration that RTTT funding does in fact produce results.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jorge Luis Garcia', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Jorge Luis Garcia  
Leader, Arizona State Senate Democrats