

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 12, 2010

The Honorable David Obey, Chairman
House Committee on Appropriations;
Chairman, Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education
2358-B Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jerry Lewis, Ranking Member
House Committee on Appropriations
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Todd Tiahrt, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education
House Committee on Appropriations
2441 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Obey, Ranking Member Lewis, and Ranking Member Tiahrt,

In this difficult appropriations year, we thank you for your support for high-quality early learning, including funding increases for Head Start and the Child Care and Development Block Grant. As the Fiscal Year 2011 appropriations process moves forward, we urge you to also strongly support the Early Learning Challenge Fund at the Senate Appropriations Committee's level of \$300 million for Fiscal Year 2011.

For a generation, economists have documented the high return on investment from high-quality early learning programs – as high as \$16 for each dollar invested. Eighty-five percent of brain development occurs before children reach age 5, so investing early helps close academic achievement gaps before students enter kindergarten. The research is clear. Students in high-quality early learning settings are less likely than their peers to require special education services, drop out of high school, commit crime, become teen parents, or become dependent on welfare later in life. As we work to cut our deficit, investing in high-quality early learning can make a major impact on our nation's long-term fiscal health.

The most vulnerable young children are those in low-income families. Unfortunately, current funding levels allow less than half of eligible preschool children to participate in Head Start; only 4 percent of eligible infants and toddlers to participate in Early Head Start; and only one in six eligible children to receive CCDBG federal child care subsidies. Even in the general population, only 24 percent of four year olds and 4 percent of three year olds attend state-funded pre-K programs.

As you know, in February of 2010, President Obama's Fiscal Year 2011 budget supported a proposed version of SAFRA with \$9.3 billion over 10 years for the Early Learning Challenge Fund. This systems-changing program will incentivize states to build a comprehensive, high-quality early learning system for children from birth through age five. The Early Learning Challenge Fund will promote an effective early childhood workforce; parental involvement; data-based decision-making; early learning standards; and a program quality rating system. The Early Learning Challenge Fund will provide supports for programs across all early childhood education settings, including Head Start, state-funded pre-kindergarten, IDEA Part C, Child Care and Development Block Grants, and other early childhood programs. The Early Learning Challenge Fund will leverage investments from state and local governments, philanthropy, and the private sector, with a focus on quality and alignment of infrastructure between and among these programs.

In September of 2009, the House passed H.R. 3221, the Student Aid and Fiscal Responsibility Act (SAFRA) to authorize the Early Learning Challenge Fund at \$1 billion annually for 8 years. Despite bipartisan support for the Early Learning Challenge Fund, it was dropped from the final Health and Education Reconciliation Act of 2010 that was signed into law in March of 2010.

In July of 2010, the Senate Appropriations Committee passed its version of the FY 2011 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education bill. This bill included \$300 million for the Early Learning Challenge Fund for Fiscal Year 2011. As the Fiscal Year 2011 appropriations process moves forward, we urge you to fund the Early Learning Challenge Fund at the Senate's level of \$300 million.

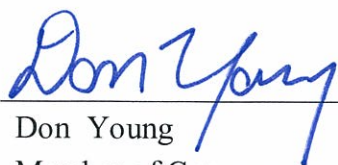
Sincerely,



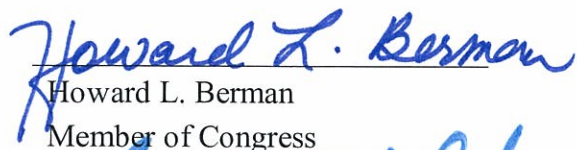
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Member of Congress



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Member of Congress



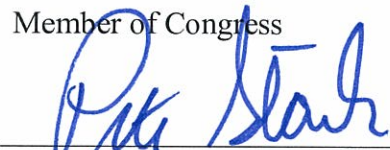
Don Young
Member of Congress



Howard L. Berman
Member of Congress



Rush D. Holt
Member of Congress



Fortney Pete Stark
Member of Congress



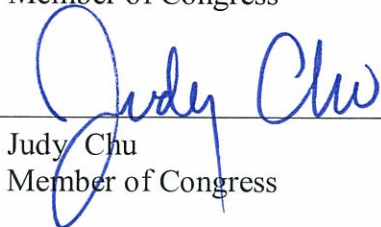
Steven R. Rothman
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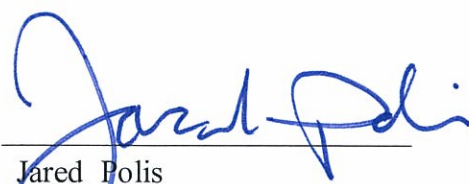
Barbara Lee
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Todd R. Platts
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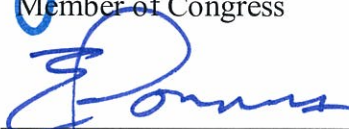
Judy Chu
Member of Congress



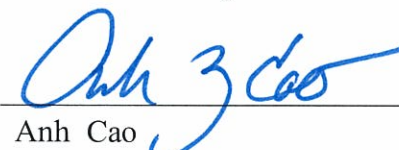
Jared Polis
Member of Congress



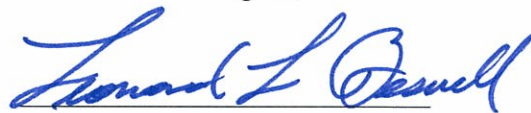
Jim McDermott
Member of Congress



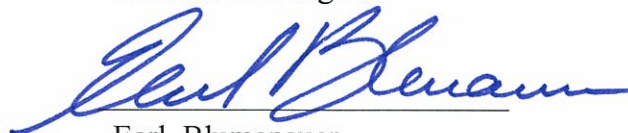
Edolphus Towns
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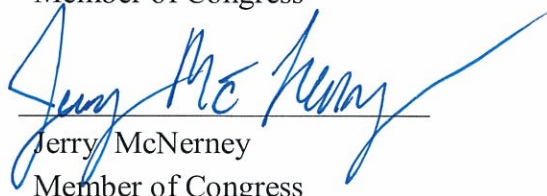
Anh Cao
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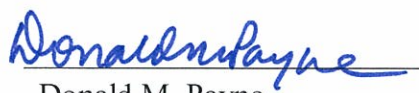
Leonard L. Boswell
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Earl Blumenauer
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Jerry McNerney
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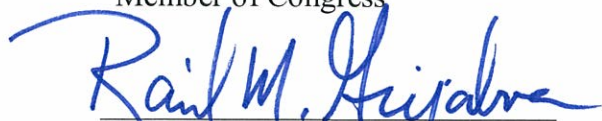
Donald M. Payne
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Gwen Moore
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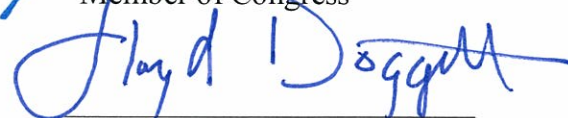
Raul M. Grijálva
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John A. Yarmuth
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Ruben Hinojosa
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Lloyd Doggett
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Keith Ellison
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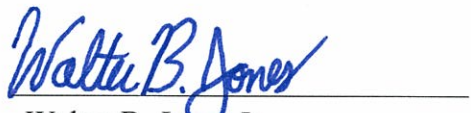
Mary Jo Kilroy
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Lois Capps
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Walter B. Jones Jr.
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Tammy Baldwin
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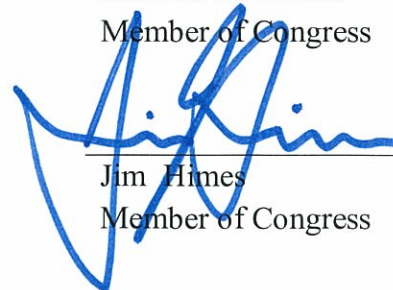
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Loretta Sanchez
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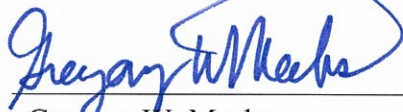
Paul D. Tonko
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Joe Courtney
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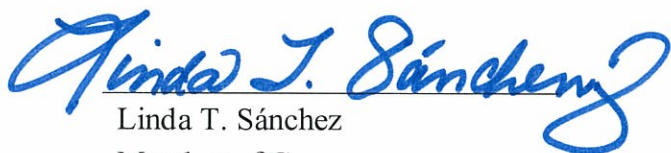
Robert E. Andrews
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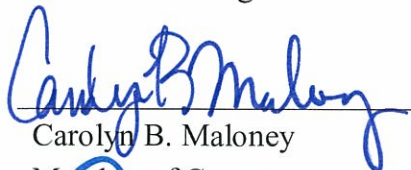
Gregory W. Meeks
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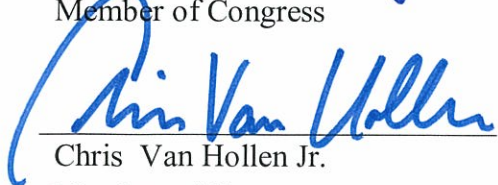
Mike Thompson
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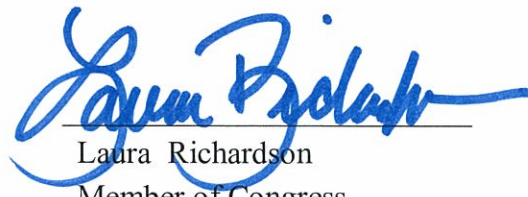
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Carolyn B. Maloney
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Chris Van Hollen Jr.
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Laura Richardson
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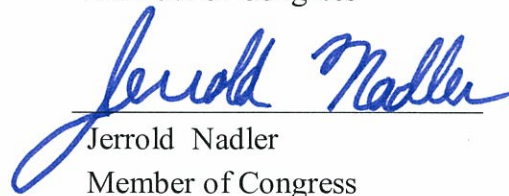
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Dina Titus
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Eliot L. Engel
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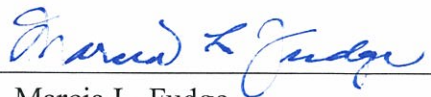
Susan A. Davis
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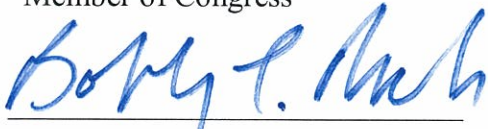
Doris O. Matsui
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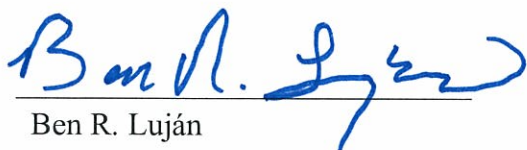
Carolyn McCarthy
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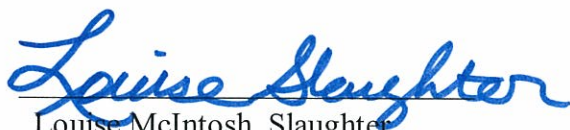
Marcia L. Fudge
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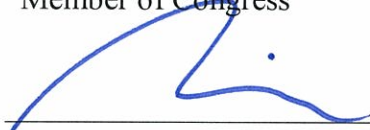
Bobby L. Rush
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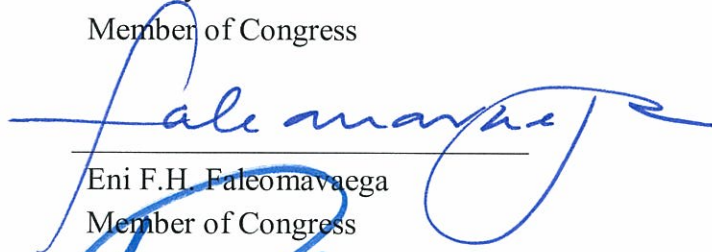
Ben R. Luján
Member of Congress



Louise McIntosh Slaughter
Member of Congress



Anthony D. Weiner
Member of Congress



Eni F.H. Faleomavaega
Member of Congress



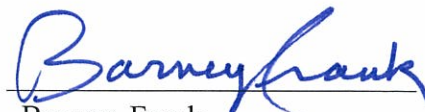
David Wu
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Danny K. Davis
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Gregorio Sablan
Member of Congress



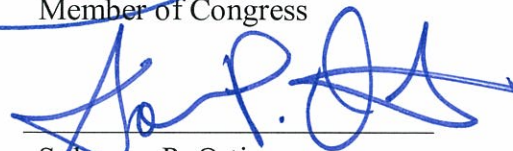
Barney Frank
Member of Congress



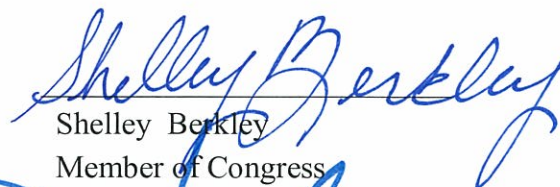
Phil Hare
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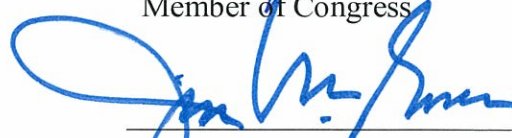
Anna G. Eshoo
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Solomon P. Ortiz
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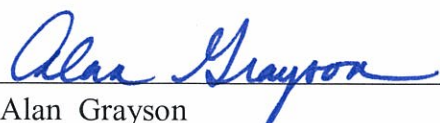
Shelley Berkley
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James P. McGovern
Member of Congress



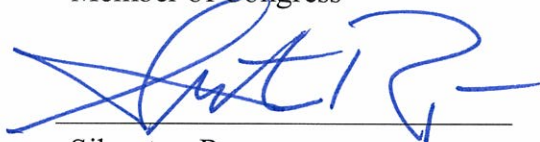
Betty Sutton
Member of Congress



Alan Grayson
Member of Congress



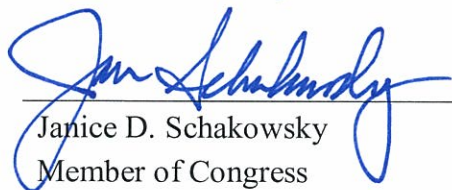
Corrine Brown
Member of Congress



Silvestre Reyes
Member of Congress



Robert A. Brady
Member of Congress



Janice D. Schakowsky
Member of Congress



William D. Delahunt
Member of Congress



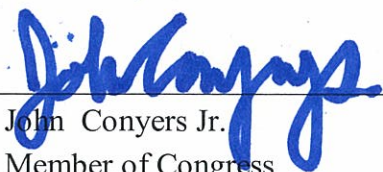
Andre Carson
Member of Congress



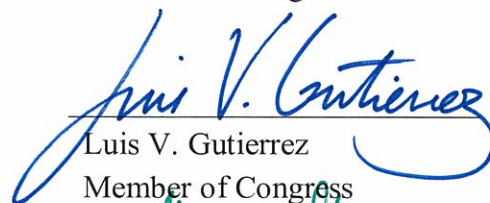
John P. Sarbanes
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John D. Dingell
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John Conyers Jr.
Member of Congress



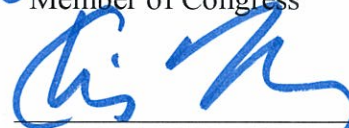
Luis V. Gutierrez
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Gene Green
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Jackie Speier
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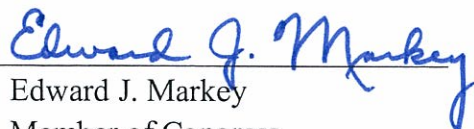
Christopher S. Murphy
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Ron Kind
Member of Congress



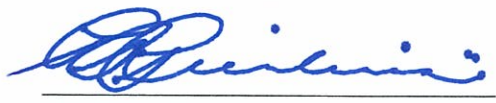
Nick J. Rahall II
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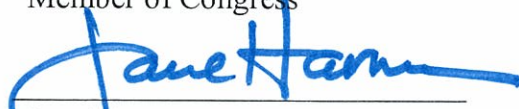

Edward J. Markey
Member of Congress

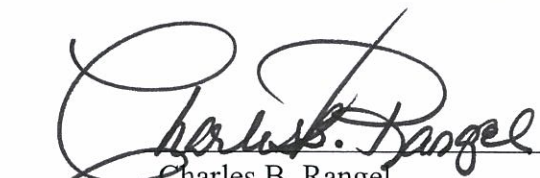

Joe Baca
Member of Congress



Wm. Lacy Clay
Member of Congress


John Garamendi M.C.
Member of Congress

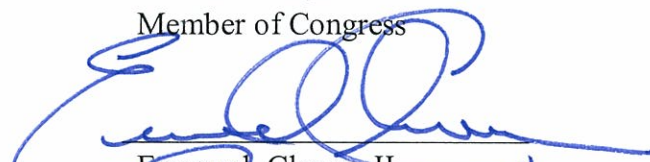

Pedro R. Pierluisi
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Jane Harman
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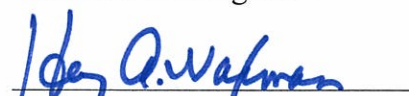

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