

April 19, 2019

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Chair, Appropriations Subcommittee on
Labor, HHS, Education & Related Agencies
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member, Appropriations
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, Education
& Related Agencies
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Chair, Appropriations Subcommittee on
Labor, HHS, Education & Related Agencies
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tom Cole
Ranking Member, Appropriations
Subcommittee
on Labor, HHS, Education & Related Agen
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Blunt, Ranking Member Murray, Chairwoman DeLauro and Ranking Member Cole:

The 113 undersigned organizations write in support of no less than \$15 million for the Statewide Family Engagement Centers (SFECs) grant program in the FY 2020 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies (L-HHS-ED) appropriations bill, a \$5 million increase over FY19. We very much appreciate the Subcommittee's leadership in funding this program in FY 2019 and urge the adoption of this increase in FY2020.

In addition to our support of additional resources for the SFEC program, we recognize that non-defense discretionary (NDD) funding for FY 2020 will be cut by \$55 billion if caps under the Budget Control Act are not raised. While strongly advocating for this increase, we also urge Congress to first reach a new budget agreement to avert these cuts and increase NDD funding levels over FY 2019. This budget deal and an increase in the spending caps is vital to being able to provide \$15 million for this program.

The SFECs grant program is one of the few non-categorical programs funded under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). Its inclusion in ESEA and the \$10 million appropriation in FY2019 is evidence of Congress' recognition of the importance of parent and family engagement. The SFECs program builds capacity for states and school districts to systematically embed family engagement policies and practices in their education plans. SFECs will also provide much needed professional development for educators and school leaders to strengthen school-family partnerships and parent teacher relationships. Additionally, the SFEC program provides direct services to families to give them the tools to effectively work with their child's school to improve their child's academic outcomes and overall well-being.

Thirteen states have SFECs up and running now thanks to the initial investments of \$10 million in FYs 2018 and 2019. The \$5 million increase would enable the Department to fund additional

states which, depending on the size of each grant could bring the number of SFECs to 20 across the country. Without an increase in the SFEC program, no new centers can be established. This means 41.7 million K-12 students and their families will be unable to benefit from enhanced engagement supports and services provided by SFECs.

The SFEC program provides states, school districts, school leaders and parents the professional development, skills and resources to effectively engage families as critical stakeholders to in student success and school improvement. Research shows that family engagement advances the academic and developmental progress of children and drives student achievement. Our organizations believe that an investment in SFECs is critical to ensuring that families are meaningfully supported and engaged in their child's education, so they can support our nation's students in becoming fully prepared for higher education, workforce and career opportunities in the 21st century.

Thank you for your consideration of our request and we look forward to working with you to ensure this important program receives no less than \$15 million in FY 2020.

Sincerely,

National Organizations

Advocates for Justice and Education
African American Ministers In Action
African Caribbean American Parents of Children with Disabilities, Inc.
Afterschool Alliance
American Counseling Association
American Federation of School Administrators
ASPIRA Association, Inc.
Association of Educational Service Agencies (AESA)
Center for Family Involvement
City Year
Community Inclusion & Development Alliance
Council for Exceptional Children
Council of Administrators of Special Education (CASE)
Easterseals
EDGE Consulting Partners
Family Resource Center for Disabilities & Special Needs/Parent Training & Resource Center
First Focus Campaign for Children
Futures Without Violence
Healthy Teen Network
Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY)
Institute for Educational Leadership
Justice For Families
Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law
Learning Disabilities Association of America

NAACP

National Association for Family, School and Community Engagement (NAFSCE)

National Association of Elementary School Principals

National Association of School Psychologists

National Association of Secondary School Principals

National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE)

National Center for Families Learning

National Center for Learning Disabilities

National Center for Parent Leadership, Advocacy, and Community Empowerment (National PLACE)

National Council for Community and Education Partnerships

National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM)

National Disability Rights Network

National Education Association

National Military Family Association

National Organization for Women

National PTA

Network for Public Education

NW Disability Support

PACER Center

Parent Educational Advocacy Training Center (PEATC)

Parents as Teachers

Parents Helping Parents

PEAL Center

Pyramid Community Parent Resource Center

Sandy Hook Promise

SchoolHouse Connection

SPAN Parent Advocacy Network

Stone Soup Group

TASH

The Advocacy Institute

THRIVE Center

State Organizations

Alabama PTA

Alaska Parent Teacher Association

Arizona PTA

Arkansas PTA

Baltimore County Council PTA

California State PTA

Colorado PTA

Connecticut PTA

Delaware PTA

European PTA

Families Helping Families of Greater New Orleans
Family Voices NJ
Florida PTA
Georgia PTA
Hawaii State PTSA
Idaho PTA
Illinois PTA
IN*SOURCE (Indiana)
Indiana PTA
Kansas PTA
Kentucky State PTA
Leadership in Disabilities & Achievement of Hawaii
Louisiana State Parent Teacher Association
Maine Parent Federation
Maine PTA
Maryland PTA
Massachusetts PTA
Michigan PTA
Minnesota PTA
Mississippi PTA
Missouri Congress of Parents and Teachers
Nebraska PTA
Nevada PTA
New Jersey PTA
New Mexico PTA
New York State PTA
North Carolina PTA
Ohio PTA
Oklahoma PTA
Oregon PTA
Parent Information Center of Delaware
Parent to Parent of Georgia
Parent to Parent of Miami
Pennsylvania Congress of Parents & Teachers, Inc
Utah PTA
Puerto Rico PTA
SC PTA
South Dakota PTA
Tennessee PTA
Texas PTA
The Parents' Place of MD
Vermont Family Network
Virginia PTA
Washington State PTA

West Virginia Parent Teacher Association

Wisconsin Family Assistance Center for Education Training and Support

Wisconsin PTA

Wyoming PTA