March 22, 2016

The Honorable Kay Granger  The Honorable Nita Lowey
Committee on Appropriations Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations State, Foreign Operations
HT-2, The Capitol 1016 Longworth House Office
Building Washington, DC 20515 Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Granger and Ranking Member Lowey:

We are writing to urge you to strongly support international basic education programs in the fiscal year 2017 State and Foreign Operations Appropriations bill. Through robust funding of global basic education, we can help reduce poverty through economic growth, build markets for U.S. exports, enhance stability and security, and promote effective development across sectors.

Unfortunately, education is increasingly under attack by extremists who feel threatened by the power of education. Attacks by Boko Haram in Nigeria and the Taliban in Pakistan are shocking examples of this fear. We must join with young people like Malala Yousafzai, the Pakistani girl who defied the Taliban and risked her life demanding the right to an education. Through quality basic education programs, we can help ensure all children are able to fulfill their potential and have access to a better life.

Improving the education of the world’s poor is critical to breaking the cycle of poverty, violence, and to strengthening communities. Education equips millions with the tools needed to forge a path to self-sufficiency and better lives. Mounting evidence shows that educating girls is one of the most cost-effective ways to spur development and create a ripple effect throughout society.

In many countries, the school is the center of the community and can serve an important role in also facilitating health and food programs. Quality education has been shown to lower child and maternal mortality rates, increase life expectancy, and significantly decrease vulnerability to deadly diseases around the globe. This is especially important in places like South Sudan where a young girl is three times more likely to die in pregnancy or childbirth than to reach the 8th grade.

U.S. investments that focus on the effective and efficient use of taxpayer dollars are vital to ensure children have access to a quality education. By focusing on clear goals in strong bilateral programs, including literacy and access to education for children in areas of conflict and crises, the U.S. is able to build relationships with other education actors around our common goals and share our unique technical knowledge and capabilities. Similarly, U.S. support of other donors and multilateral organizations like the Global Partnership for Education complements bilateral programs, fosters coordination, and builds on the commitment of developing countries.
As representatives of the U.S. taxpayer, we value the lasting impact made by global basic education programs and urge your Subcommittee to strongly support international basic education programs in the fiscal year 2017 State and Foreign Operations Appropriations bill. We appreciate your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

Dave Reichert  
Member of Congress

Brad Ashford  
Member of Congress

Suzanne Bonamici  
Member of Congress

Julia Brownley  
Member of Congress

Lois Capps  
Member of Congress

Andre Carson  
Member of Congress

Judy Chu  
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Katherine M. Clark  
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Jim McDermott  
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Earl Blumenauer  
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Susan Davis
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Diana DeGette
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Donna F. Edwards
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Denny Heck  
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Brenda L. Lawrence  
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Sander M. Levin  
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