

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 22, 2025

Dear Chair Graham and Ranking Member Schatz,

Thank you for continuing your bipartisan commitment to fighting poverty and improving education for children around the world by including \$922 million for the Basic Education account in the fiscal year 2024 State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs (SFOPS) bill and the continuing resolution for fiscal year 2025.

In recognition of the fact that international basic education programs advance America's interests, we are writing to urge you to provide \$970 million for the International Basic Education account in the FY2026 SFOPS Programs bill, including \$150 million for the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) and \$30.4 million for Education Cannot Wait (ECW).

Access to quality education reduces poverty, supports future trade partners, improves the global economy, bolsters peace and security, and strengthens public health. It also reflects the best of American values: the belief in opportunity, human dignity, and the transformative power of knowledge. Supporting education for vulnerable children around the world is a tangible expression of U.S. leadership and compassion, demonstrating our commitment to a more just, stable, and prosperous global order.

Research shows that increasing access to education reduces political violence and conflict. Doubling the percentage of youth with secondary education can cut the risk of conflict in half, and secondary education can reduce the likelihood of young people supporting political violence by 48%. At the same time, education investments yield significant economic returns. Each additional year of schooling increases adult hourly wages by 9%. Girls' education, in particular, delivers high returns, with every \$1 invested generating up to \$2.80 in economic benefits. These efforts build the foundation for stronger economies and future trading partners.

Investing in education also strengthens America's global standing. As countries like China and Russia expand their influence through strategic aid and infrastructure projects, U.S. support for basic education serves as a powerful counterweight—one that fosters goodwill, enhances our reputation abroad, and reaffirms our role as a global leader. Africa, with the youngest and fastest-growing population in the world, presents a critical opportunity for engagement. If we step back, others will step in.

Support for initiatives like GPE and ECW amplifies the impact of U.S. investments. GPE fosters effective, country-led strategies to improve education systems in 90 low-income countries. Since 2022, GPE grants have reached 253 million children, accounting for close to 40% of school-aged children in 76 countries. ECW delivers tailored educational support in emergency settings, including to refugees, internally displaced persons, and others in crisis settings. Since its inception, ECW has reached 11.4 million children and trained over 188,000 teachers.

The need for investment is urgent. Globally, 251 million children are out of school, and three out of four children in low- to middle-income countries cannot read a simple text. One in six

children lives in a conflict zone, and nearly half of refugee children were out of school in 2024. Providing education to these children fosters admiration for U.S. values, reduces conflict, and builds stronger international partnerships.

To build a more peaceful, just, and prosperous world for all children, including our own, we urge you to allocate \$970 million for International Basic Education in the fiscal year 2026 State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs appropriations bill, with \$150 million for GPE and \$30.4 million for ECW. We appreciate your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,




Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator



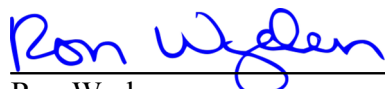
Christopher S. Murphy
United States Senator



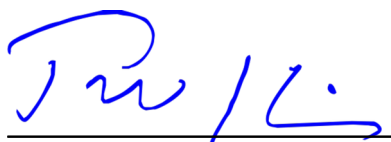
Alex Padilla
United States Senator



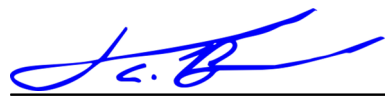
Maria Cantwell
United States Senator



Ron Wyden
United States Senator



Tim Kaine
United States Senator



Cory A. Booker
United States Senator



Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator



Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator



Gary C. Peters
United States Senator



Angela Alsobrooks
United States Senator



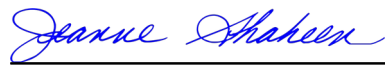
Jacky Rosen
United States Senator



Andy Kim
United States Senator



Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator



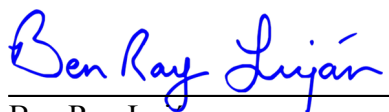
Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator



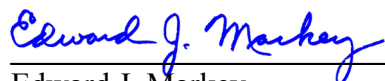
Tina Smith
United States Senator



Jack Reed
United States Senator



Ben Ray Lujan
United States Senator




Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



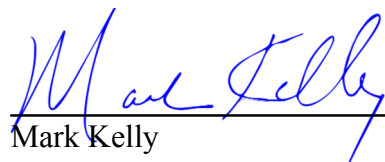
Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



Mark Kelly
United States Senator



Peter Welch
United States Senator



Martin Heinrich
United States Senator



Bernard Sanders
United States Senator



Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



Elissa Slotkin
United States Senator