

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 17, 2016

The Honorable Lindsey Graham
Chairman
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee
on State and Foreign Operations
290 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee
on State and Foreign Operations
437 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Graham and Ranking Member Leahy:

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 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.

Improving the education of the world's poor is critical to breaking the cycle of poverty and violence and strengthening communities. Education equips millions of girls and boys with the tools they need 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 economic development and create a ripple effect throughout society. In addition, education programs not only teach children to read and write, but also help improve their health and safety.

But education is increasingly under attack by extremists who feel threatened by the power of education. Recent attacks by Boko Haram in Nigeria, the Taliban in Pakistan, and ISIL in the Middle East 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 access to education. Through quality education, we can support safe learning opportunities for children in conflict and crisis situations, helping all children fulfill their potential and have the chance at a better life.

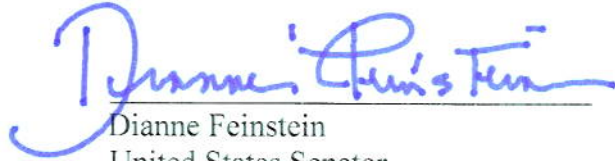
U.S. investments that focus on the effective and efficient use of taxpayer dollars accompanied by rigorous standards of transparency and accountability are vital to ensure children have access to a quality education and are learning. By focusing on clear goals in strong bilateral programs, including literacy and access to education for children in areas of conflict and crises, the U.S. is able to strengthen partnerships. 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.

We value the lasting impact made by basic education programs and urge your Subcommittee to strongly support international basic education in the fiscal year 2017 State and Foreign Operations Appropriations bill. We appreciate your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,



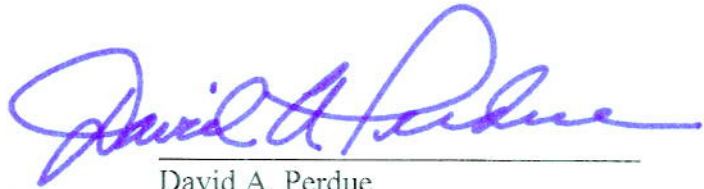
Johnny Isakson
United States Senator



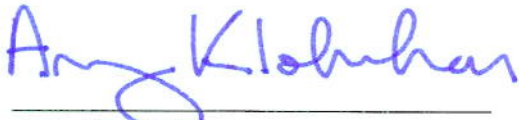
Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator



Thom Tillis
United States Senator



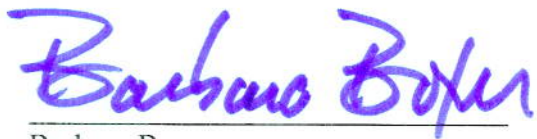
David A. Perdue
United States Senator



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



Martin Heinrich
United States Senator



Barbara Boxer
United States Senator



Bernard Sanders
United States Senator



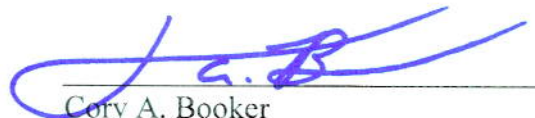
Kirsten E. Gillibrand
United States Senator



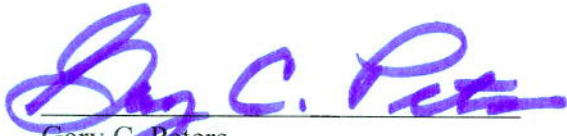
Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator



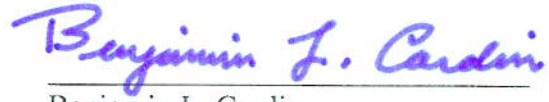
Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator



Cory A. Booker
United States Senator



Gary C. Peters
United States Senator



Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator



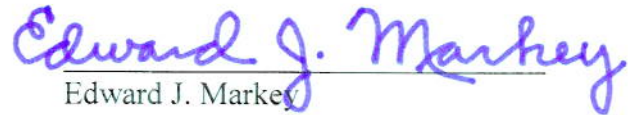
Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



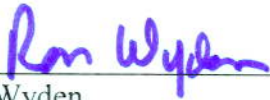
Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator



Sherrod Brown
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



Ron Wyden
United States Senator



Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator



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United States Senator