

June XX 2011

Dear Chairman Leahy and Ranking Member Graham:

We are writing to urge you to strongly support international basic education programs in the FY 2012 State and Foreign Operations Appropriations bill.

Improving the education of the world's poor is a humanitarian and moral imperative. But it also serves our own interests by widening opportunities for trade and commerce and lifting nations out of poverty and spurring economic growth. Today, the fastest-growing markets for America's goods are in developing countries, representing 40% of U.S. exports and one out of every five American jobs. Education is therefore essential to building stable trading partners that growing U.S. export markets require.

A significant U.S. investment in international basic education also directly enhances our national security. Currently, there are currently 67 million out-of-school children, over half of which are in conflict countries. By 2050, there will be 1.2 billion youth around the world- with nine out of ten living in the developing world. In war-torn regions and fragile states, education enables children to make reasoned decisions about their futures, and offers a path away from despair and hopelessness. Through education, the U.S. can help promote lasting peace by equipping populations vulnerable to civil war and regional conflict with the means to a better life.

Perhaps most importantly, education promotes effective and sustainable development. In many countries, the school is the center of the community and can serve an important role in facilitating other development efforts, such as global health and food security. In addition, quality education has been shown to lower child and maternal mortality rates, increase life expectancy, and significantly decrease vulnerability to HIV/AIDS and other deadly diseases. For example, young people who have completed primary education are roughly half as likely to contract HIV and AIDS as those with little or no education. A recent study found that half of the reduction of child mortality, totaling 4.2 million lives saved over the past 40 years, was due to better education of women.

For these reasons, we strongly urge your Subcommittee to strongly support international basic education programs in the fiscal year 2012 State and Foreign Operations Appropriations bill. We appreciate your consideration of our request.

Sen. Feinstein

Sen. Isakson

Letter Closes Friday, June 24th

To sign: Contact either Rich Harper in Senator Feinstein's office (Richard_Harper@feinstein.senate.gov) or Chris Sullivan in Isakson's office (Chris_Sullivan@isakson.senate.gov).