

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 24, 2016

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chairman
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, & Education
Committee on Appropriations
United States Congress
2358-B Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, & Education
Committee on Appropriations
United States Congress
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Cole and Ranking Member DeLauro:

As your Subcommittee considers the Fiscal Year 2017 appropriations bill for the Department of Education, we urge you to maintain the investment in the Innovative Approaches to Literacy (IAL) grant program, which was authorized in the Every Student Succeeds Act. IAL provides competitive awards to school libraries and national not-for-profit organizations, including partnerships that reach families outside of local educational agencies, for providing books and childhood literacy activities to children and families in high need communities. The program also supports parental engagement and focuses on promoting student literacy from birth through high school.

Since its inception in Fiscal Year 2012, 78 IAL grants have been awarded to nonprofit organizations and school districts across the nation. Some examples of IAL grant activities include:

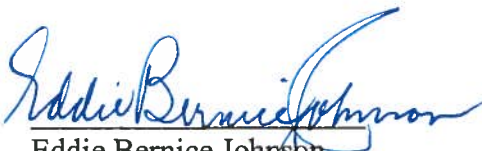
- Maryetta School District, located in a very rural, economically depressed area of Northeastern Oklahoma, is using its IAL grant to improve literacy achievement for 624 students (grades K-8th) through the intense Reading Every-day for Academic Development (iREAD) Project. Project objectives and activities support innovative programs that promote early literacy for young children, motivate older children to read, and increase student achievement by using school libraries, distributing free books to children and their families, and offering high-quality literacy activities and innovative technology tools.
- Save the Children and Reach Out and Read received a two-year grant in FY2014 to build community capacity to support children's education and well-being in some of the United States' most impoverished and isolated regions. Through this project, the two organizations are partnering to serve nearly 20,000 children in 30 rural communities in Arizona, Colorado, Kentucky, and South Carolina, building home libraries, improving community collaboration, and empowering families.
- Reading Is Fundamental (RIF) used IAL funds to launch a two-year research study examining stemming summer learning loss among children living in poverty. Of the 41 participating school districts across 16 states with a participating population of 33,000 second- through fourth-grade students, the most underserved districts showed the most gains, including rural populations.


Ensuring children's access to books is a critical component of our nation's effort to promote life-long learning and remains a key aspect of early childhood literacy. For American families living in poverty, access to reading materials is severely limited. Children living in poverty have fewer books in their homes than their peers, and

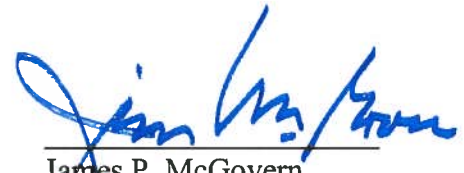
this unfortunate reality hinders their ability to prepare for school and stay on track. We also recognize the importance of effective school library programs in promoting literacy and advancing student achievement.

Congress has taken an important step in supporting the needs of disadvantaged students by providing IAL funding for book distribution, early literacy services, and effective school library programs. The Administration's budget request also includes funding for IAL. We ask that you maintain this investment in the Fiscal Year 2017 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations bill.


Sincerely,


Eddie Bernice Johnson
Member of Congress



Don Young
Member of Congress


James P. McGovern
Member of Congress


Theodore E. Deutch
Member of Congress



Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress


Keith Ellison
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Juan Vargas
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Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress

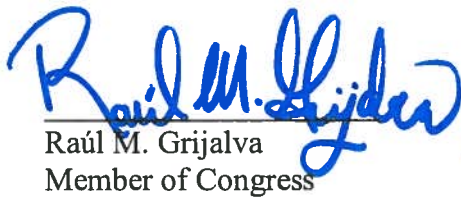

Susan A. Davis
Member of Congress


Kathy Castor
Member of Congress

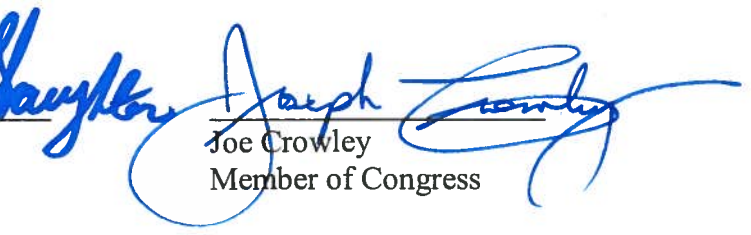

Gwen Moore
Member of Congress

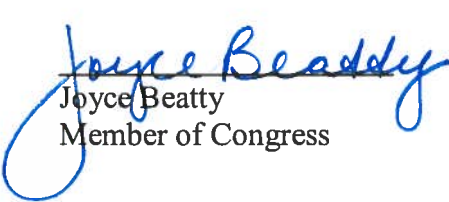

Corrine Brown
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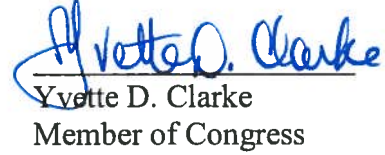

Matt Cartwright
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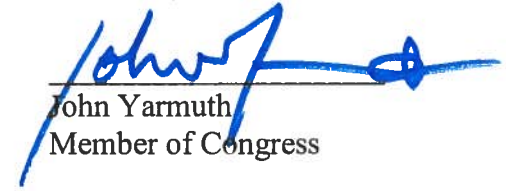

Raúl M. Grijalva
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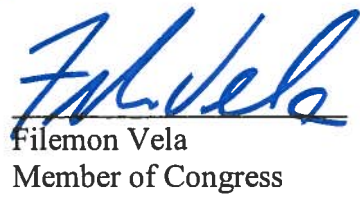

Louise M. Slaughter
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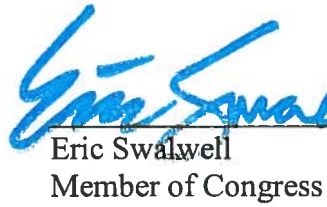

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Alcee L. Hastings
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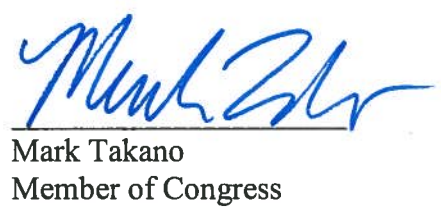

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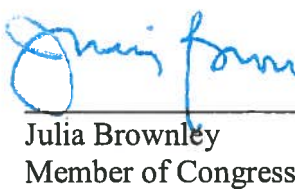

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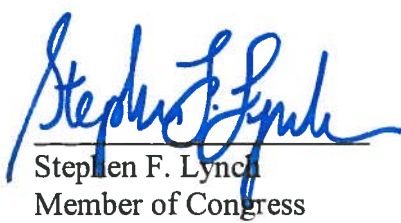

Al Green
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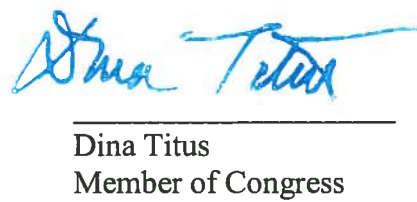

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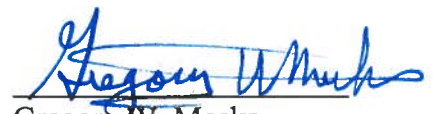

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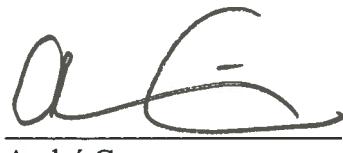

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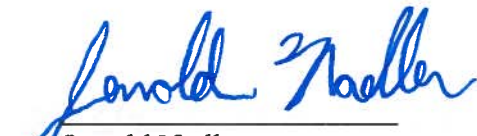

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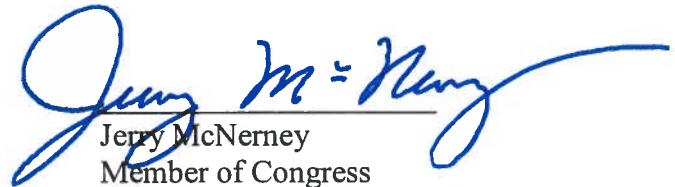

Mark Takai
Member of Congress

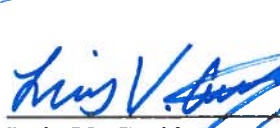

Loretta Sanchez
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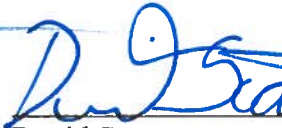

Katherine M. Clark
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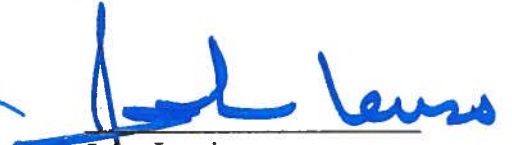

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John Lewis
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John K. Delaney
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Henry C. "Hank" Johnson Jr.
Member of Congress

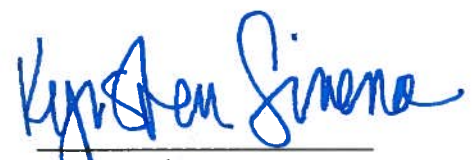

Sean Patrick Maloney
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Gene Green
Member of Congress

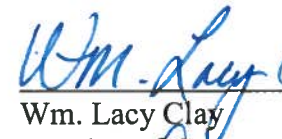

Peter Welch
Member of Congress



Brenda L. Lawrence
Member of Congress


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Member of Congress

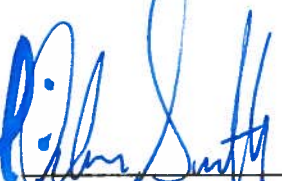

Kyrsten Sinema
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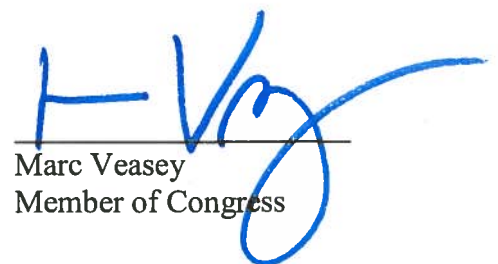

Lois Capps
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Wm. Lacy Clay
Member of Congress

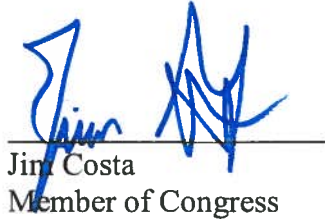

Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Member of Congress


John Garamendi
Member of Congress

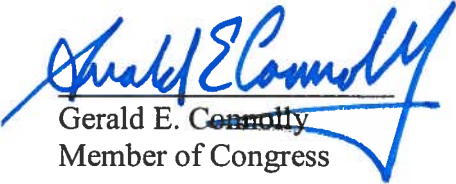

Adam Smith
Member of Congress

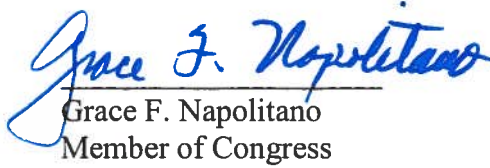

Marc Veasey
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G.K. Butterfield
Member of Congress

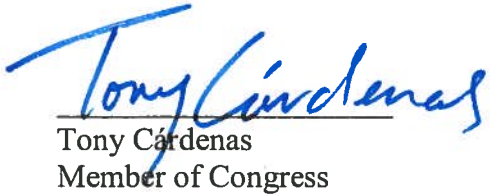

Jim Costa
Member of Congress

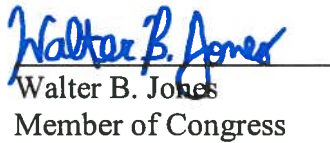

Janice Hahn
Member of Congress

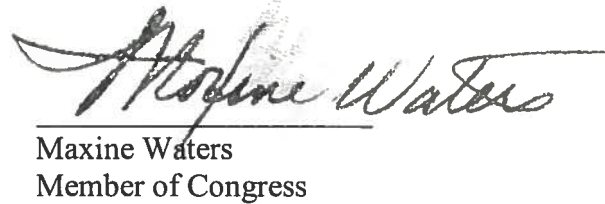

Gerald E. Connolly
Member of Congress



Grace F. Napolitano
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Michelle Lujan Grisham
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Tony Cardenas
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Walter B. Jones
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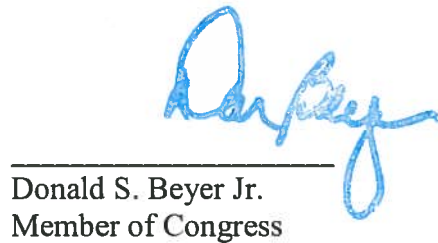

Maxine Waters
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Robin L. Kelly
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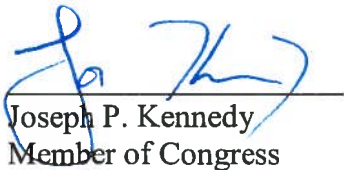

Marcia L. Fudge
Member of Congress


David N. Cicilline
Member of Congress

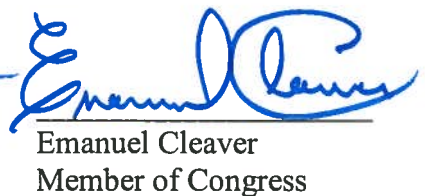

Suzanne Bonamici
Member of Congress

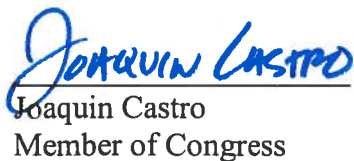

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Debbie Dingell
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Joseph P. Kennedy
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Stacey Plaskett
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Emanuel Cleaver
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Joaquin Castro
Member of Congress



Diana DeGette
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Chaka Fattah
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Carolyn B. Maloney
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Ron Kind
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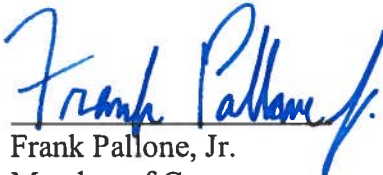

Jim McDermott
Member of Congress


Bobby L. Rush
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Seth Moulton
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John Conyers
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Tom MacArthur
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Frank Pallone, Jr.
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Grace Meng
Member of Congress

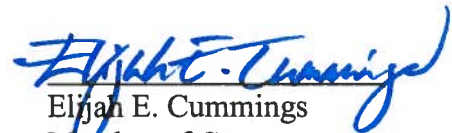

Martha McSally
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Ann McLane Kuster
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John Sarbanes
Member of Congress

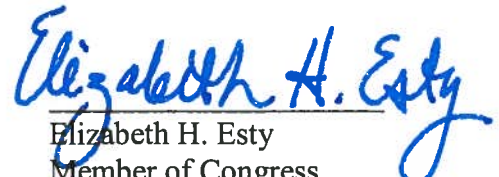

Dave Loebsack
Member of Congress

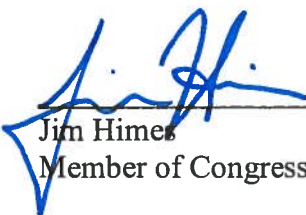

Ben Ray Lujan
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Elijah E. Cummings
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Mark DeSaulnier
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Alan Grayson
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Elizabeth H. Esty
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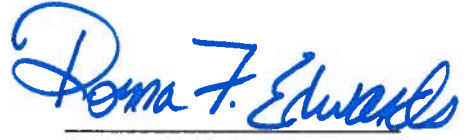

Bonnie Watson Coleman
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Cedric L. Richmond
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