

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 19, 2018

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 Fiscal Year 2019 appropriations, we urge you to **maintain level funding for the Innovative Approaches to Literacy (IAL) grant program administered by the Department of Education**, authorized in the Every Students Succeeds Act (ESSA). IAL provides competitive awards to school libraries and national not-for-profit organizations, including partnerships that reach families outside of local education agencies (LEAs) and children and families in high-need, underserved communities. By providing age-appropriate books, supporting parental engagement programs, and reinforcing professional development, the IAL program helps to ensure that children enter school ready to learn and best positioned for success.

Since its inception in Fiscal Year 2012, 126 IAL grants have been awarded to non-profit organizations and school districts across every region of the US. Some examples of IAL grant activities include:

- Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools, NC, Schools (WSFCS) received an Innovative Approaches to Literacy (IAL) grant to support school librarians implementing technology tools to build literacy skills in young children and increase family engagement. The WSFCS program is increasing access to print and digital resources for youth, while developing targeted age and skill appropriate material. The grant is also supporting expanded summer media hours, distribution of material for home libraries as well as supporting training for school librarians and teachers. With over 52,000 students, WSFCS is the fifth largest school system in North Carolina.
- Reach Out and Read (ROR) and Save the Children partnered to engage schools, families and communities in creating literacy-rich environments for children in economically disadvantaged rural areas of Arizona, Colorado, Kentucky and South Carolina. Reach Out and Read leveraged the existing healthcare infrastructure to promote early literacy and language development among children in 16 counties. In Year 2 of the grant, 163 medical providers in 42 clinics delivered developmentally appropriate anticipatory guidance at 43,000 well-child visits. Children received new books and parents learned how reading, singing and rhyming help facilitate healthy brain development and language acquisition.

- Reading Is Fundamental (RIF) used IAL funds to launch a two-year research study focused on reducing the “summer learning slide” for children living in poverty. The study enabled RIF to work with 41 school districts in 16 states, reaching 33,000 second, third and fourth-grade students and their teachers. Classrooms received STEM-themed book collections, teachers received professional development and literacy resources, and students got books to take home and keep. Fifty-seven percent of the students involved in the study showed gains in reading proficiency over the summer.

Access to high-quality literacy programming and resources remains a critical component of early childhood literacy. For American families living in poverty and limited to the services of high-need local educational authorities, access to quality reading materials and adequate learning facilities is prohibitive, fostering chronic disadvantages for already underserved youth.

The 114th Congress took important steps in supporting the needs of disadvantaged students by providing IAL authorization through the passage of ESSA and funding through appropriations since 2012. From Alaska, to New York, and Kentucky to California, this important appropriation provides funding for initiatives that include book distribution, early literacy services, technological integration and support for literacy activities, professional development for educators, culturally responsive literacy workshops for parents/families, and effective school library programs.

We ask you to maintain this investment in the Fiscal Year 2019 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





Tom MacArthur
Member of Congress



David N. Cicilline
Member of Congress



Steve Cohen
Member of Congress


Gene Green
Member of Congress



Jackie Speier
Member of Congress


Peter Welch
Member of Congress


Joe Crowley
Member of Congress


Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress



Kathy Castor
Member of Congress


Adam B. Schiff
Member of Congress


Jerry McNerney
Member of Congress


Sean Patrick Maloney
Member of Congress


John Sarbanes
Member of Congress


Susan A. Davis
Member of Congress


Richard E. Neal
Member of Congress


Keith Ellison
Member of Congress


Vicente Gonzalez
Member of Congress



Ron Kind
Member of Congress



Niki Tsongas
Member of Congress



André Carson
Member of Congress



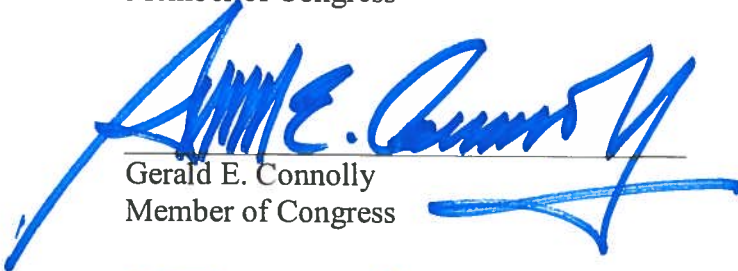
Joaquin Castro
Member of Congress



Gregory W. Meeks
Member of Congress



Eric Swalwell
Member of Congress



Gerald E. Connolly
Member of Congress



Dina Titus
Member of Congress



Bradley S. Schneider
Member of Congress



Jerrold Nadler
Member of Congress



Zoe Lofgren
Member of Congress



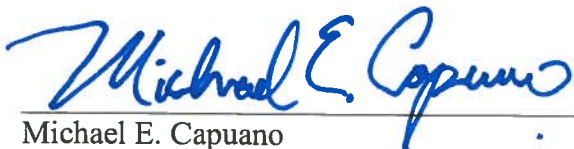
Elizabeth H. Esty
Member of Congress



Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress



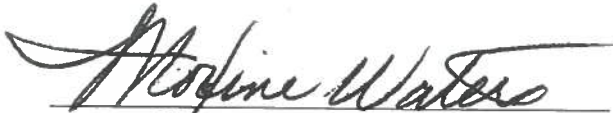
John Yarmuth
Member of Congress





Michael E. Capuano
Member of Congress




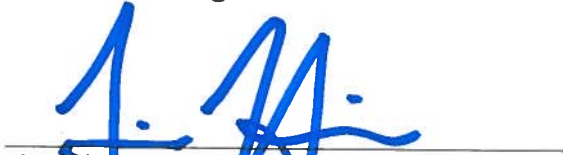
Collin Peterson
Member of Congress



Maxine Waters
Member of Congress



Michelle Lujan Grisham
Member of Congress



Seth Moulton
Member of Congress


Tom O'Halleran
Member of Congress

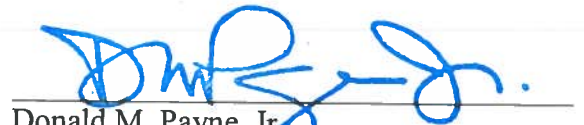

Jim Himes
Member of Congress



Elise M. Stefanik
Member of Congress



Judy Chu
Member of Congress



Louise M. Slaughter
Member of Congress


Diana DeGette
Member of Congress


Donald M. Payne, Jr.
Member of Congress


David Scott
Member of Congress


G. K. Butterfield
Member of Congress


Denny Heck
Member of Congress


Dwight Evans
Member of Congress


Julia Brownley
Member of Congress


Ann McLane Kuster
Member of Congress



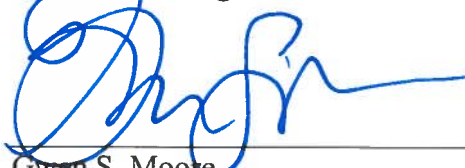
John K. Delaney
Member of Congress



Emanuel Cleaver, II
Member of Congress



Cheri Bustos
Member of Congress



Gwen S. Moore
Member of Congress



Kyrsten Sinema
Member of Congress



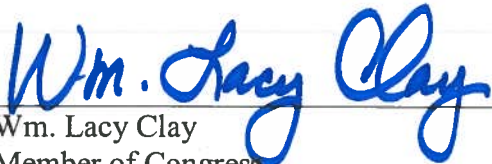
Al Lawson
Member of Congress



Doris Matsui
Member of Congress



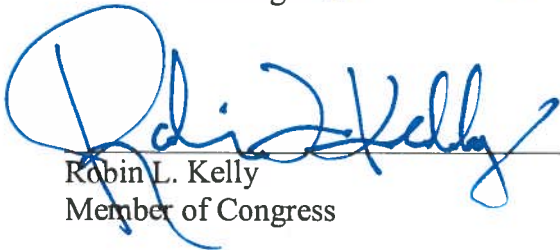
Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress



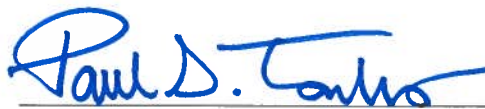
Wm. Lacy Clay
Member of Congress



Charlie Crist
Member of Congress



Robin L. Kelly
Member of Congress



Paul Tonko
Member of Congress



Sanford D. Bishop Jr.
Member of Congress



Carolyn B. Maloney
Member of Congress



Cedric L. Richmond
Member of Congress



Ruben Gallego
Member of Congress



Peter DeFazio
Member of Congress



Leonard Lance
Member of Congress



Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan
Member of Congress



Henry C. "Hank" Johnson
Member of Congress



Jimmy Gomez
Member of Congress



Marc Veasey
Member of Congress



Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



Stephanie Murphy
Member of Congress



Tulsi Gabbard
Member of Congress



Dave Loebsack
Member of Congress



Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress



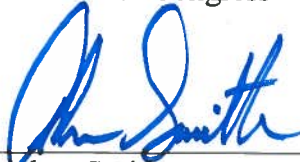
Carol Shea-Porter
Member of Congress



Adriano Espaillat
Member of Congress



Sheila Jackson Lee
Member of Congress



Adam Smith
Member of Congress



Madeleine Z. Bordallo
Member of Congress

Yvette P. Clarke

Yvette Clarke
Member of Congress

Fil Vela

Filmon Vela
Member of Congress

Raja Krishnamoorthi

Raja Krishnamoorthi
Member of Congress

Joe Courtney

Joe Courtney
Member of Congress

John Katko

John Katko
Member of Congress

Jennifer González-Colón

Jennifer González-Colón
Member of Congress

Lloyd Doggett

Lloyd Doggett
Member of Congress

Kevin Cramer

Kevin Cramer
Member of Congress

Linda T. Sánchez

Linda T. Sánchez
Member of Congress

Colleen Hanabusa

Colleen Hanabusa
Member of Congress

Raul Ruiz

Raul Ruiz
Member of Congress

Stephen Lynch

Stephen Lynch
Member of Congress

Beto O'Rourke

Beto O'Rourke
Member of Congress

Mike Doyle

Mike Doyle
Member of Congress