

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 7, 2021

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chair
Subcommittee on Labor-HHS-Education
and Related Agencies
Senate Appropriations Committee
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor-HHS-Education
and Related Agencies
Senate Appropriations Committee
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chair Murray and Ranking Member Blunt,

As you develop the Fiscal Year 2022 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill, we respectfully request that you provide \$33 million to the Parent Information Centers program at the U.S. Department of Education. This program provides crucial assistance to families of children with disabilities, helping parents navigate the special education process and improving academic, social and postsecondary outcomes. This request is a slight increase over FY2021 to support improved services to parents.

We know that each child is unique, learns in different ways, and has the potential to succeed. For children with disabilities, the ability to learn and grow academically is enshrined in the right to a free appropriate public education (FAPE) under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). For children with disabilities, parents are an integral part of ensuring that they receive FAPE, including the supports and services they need to succeed academically and later in postsecondary education and the workforce.

The Parent Information Centers program, which funds both Parent Training and Information Centers (PTIs) and Community Parent Resource Centers (CPRCs), has been helping families and schools with the education of children with disabilities for over three decades. Under this program, each state has at least one PTI, with a combined total of nearly 100 centers, technical assistance centers and CPRCS targeting underserved populations. Centers funded under this program provide critical information and training to parents of children with disabilities, helping them navigate the special education process from early interventions to transitioning out of high school and into postsecondary education. In addition to this work, centers funded under this program make valuable contributions at the state and local level to help schools improve services and outcomes for students with disabilities.

The current COVID-19 crisis as well as resulting school closures and transition to digital or other curriculum-based learning present a challenge for all students, but children with disabilities in particular. Disruptions to students' classroom-based learning experiences as well as the very real stress children and families may experience during the pandemic itself can be particularly

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traumatic for some children, even as efforts to safely reopen schools are underway throughout the nation. PTIs need additional resources to help parents navigate supports and services for their children amidst virtual or hybrid learning, and during transition to reopening, as children and their families will require more support than ever, including compensatory services to make up for lost instructional time. As such, it is crucial that the Parent Information Centers program receive \$33 million in appropriations to continue its valuable work.

Thank you for your attention to our request and for supporting the commitment to ensuring that every child has access to a high-quality public education and the opportunity to reach his or her full potential.

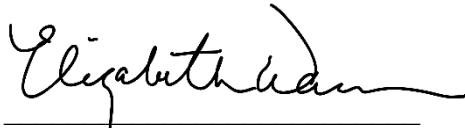
Sincerely,



Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator



Tina Smith
United States Senator



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



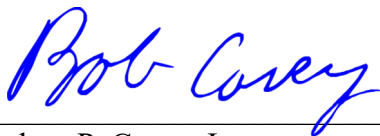
Tim Kaine
United States Senator



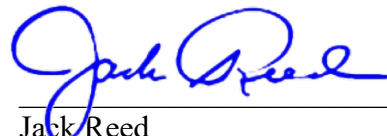
Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator



Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator



Jack Reed
United States Senator