

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 22, 2015

The Honorable Lamar Alexander
Chairman
Senate Committee on Health, Education,
Labor, and Pensions
428 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Health, Education,
Labor, and Pensions
428 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Alexander and Ranking Member Murray:

As you begin conference negotiations to reauthorize the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* (ESEA), **we urge you to maintain the Title IV language in S. 1177, the *Every Child Achieves Act* (ECAA), which reauthorizes the 21st Century Community Learning Center (21st CCLC) initiative as a separate and specific federal funding stream.**

During the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee mark-up of the ECAA on April 15th, the 21st CCLC language passed unanimously as a bipartisan amendment. The amendment, which was sponsored by Senator Murkowski and co-sponsored by Senators Sanders, Franken, Cassidy, Collins, Baldwin and Warren, was based upon the bipartisan *Afterschool for America's Children Act*, S. 308, which Senators Boxer and Murkowski introduced earlier this year. Cosponsors of the legislation include Senators Manchin, Capito, Udall, Franken, Wyden, Schumer, Schatz, Mikulski, Gillibrand, Merkley, and Baldwin.

The Title IV language in S. 1177 enhances the quality of federally funded afterschool and summer learning programs; improves the manner in which the 21st CCLC initiative is evaluated; and strengthens the school-community partnerships that are the hallmark of quality afterschool and summer learning programs. It also provides extended learning programs the ability to use 21stCCLC dollars to provide the enrichment activities authorized by the program.

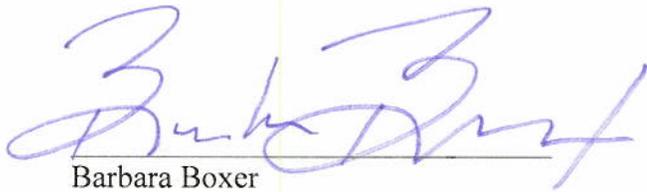
Afterschool programs, enriched expanded learning, and summer learning programs provide an infrastructure to bring in other resources to our children, including access to a broad array of additional services, programs and activities, mentors, tutors, nutritious snacks and meals, and in some places medical, dental and mental health programs. For-profits, faith-based organizations, community based organizations, tribal organizations, non-profits, charter schools, local government, colleges and universities and others serve as critical partners and lead organizations to help foster the broad positive results the program has yielded.

More than a decade of research has shown that the 21stCCLC program has had a wide-ranging positive impact on students and working families. By leveraging school and community partnerships, the program has helped millions of low-income children become successful in school and in life, while giving parents the ability to work with peace of mind, knowing their children are in a safe environment.

The bipartisan language supported **unanimously** by the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee reauthorizes the 21st CCLC program while also strengthening it to reflect what has been learned over the past decade. We strongly support maintaining and strengthening 21st CCLC to provide the next generation of before-school, afterschool and summer learning programs, and enriched expanded learning that keep young people safe, inspire them to learn, and support working families.

We urge the conferees to accept, *without changes*, the current bipartisan language in the ECAA.

Sincerely,



Barbara Boxer
United States Senator



Lisa Murkowski
United States Senator



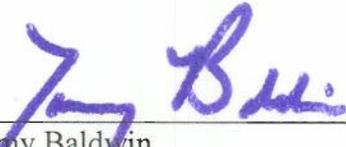
Al Franken
United States Senator



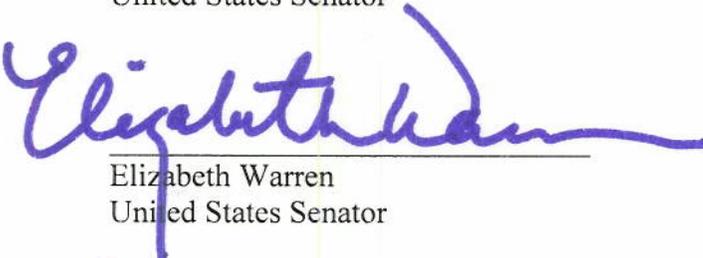
Mark R. Warner
United States Senator



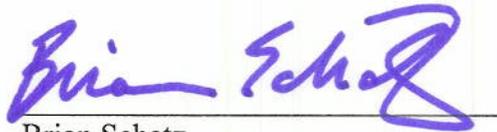
Barbara A. Mikulski
United States Senator



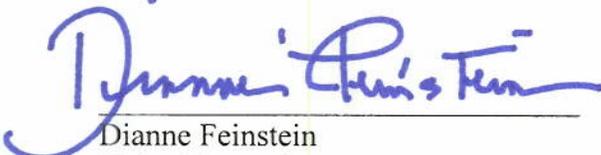
Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator



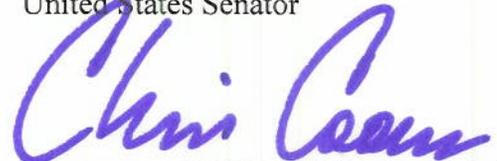
Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



Brian Schatz
United States Senator



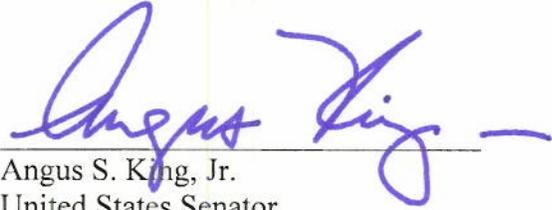
Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator



Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator



Martin Heinrich
United States Senator



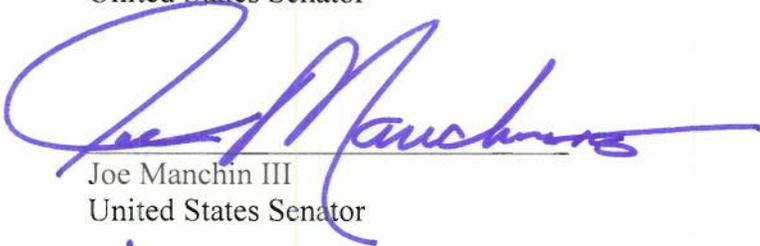
Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator



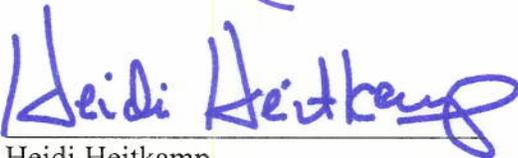
Bill Cassidy, MD
United States Senator



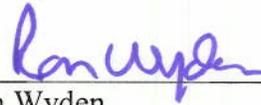
Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator



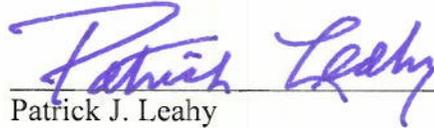
Joe Manchin III
United States Senator



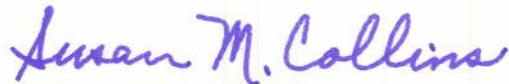
Heidi Heitkamp
United States Senator



Ron Wyden
United States Senator



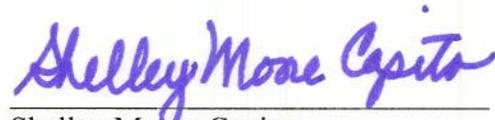
Patrick J. Leahy
United States Senator



Susan M. Collins
United States Senator



Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator



Shelley Moore Capito
United States Senator