

June 5, 2012

The Honorable Daniel K. Inouye
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Harkin
Chairman
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, Education,
and Related Agencies
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, Education,
and Related Agencies
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Inouye and Ranking Member Cochran; Chairman Harkin and Ranking Member Shelby:

We, the undersigned organizations and individuals, write in support of the proposed set-aside of Title II of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, or the Effective Teachers and Leaders State Grants, for the FY 2013 budget. We urge you to authorize the President's request of setting aside 25 percent of such funds in the FY13 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies appropriations bill.

As you are aware, the 25 percent set-aside would be used to make awards to states and school districts for teacher and leader preparation activities. Such awards would create new or enhance existing programs at the state and local level to improve the effectiveness of educators. According to the Department these funds would support—

- the creation and expansion of high-quality pathways into the teaching profession and school leadership, including university- and district-based traditional and alternative routes into teaching, and the recruitment, preparation, and retention of principals and school leadership teams that are able to turn around low-performing schools.
- investments in the preparation of new science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) teachers.
- state activities to dramatically improve the quality of teacher and principal preparation, including the development of rigorous accountability systems for teacher and principal preparation programs, the enhancement of teacher and principal certification and licensure standards so that those standards are based on performance, and the elimination of barriers to operating effective alternative routes to certification.

- the new Supporting Effective Educator Development (SEED) program, which makes grants to national non-profit organizations to support teacher and school leader enhancement projects with evidence of effectiveness.
- national research, technical assistance, outreach, and dissemination activities to strengthen teacher and principal evaluation, improve teacher and principal certification, develop and disseminate model surveys on the quality of educator support and working conditions, and scale up the work of nonprofit organizations that support LEAs in strengthening their teacher and principal pipelines and human resource practices.

Decades of research show that teachers and school leaders are the key in-school factors to improving student learning. Therefore, we must improve the effectiveness of our educators in order to improve the overall quality of our education system and the equity of that system. Reform can and should begin in the early stages of educators' careers – in their preparation, credentialing, recruitment, hiring, placement, and support on the job.

We support the policy goals of the Title II set-aside and urge you to support them with sufficient funding. However, we also urge you to ensure that the funding is appropriated in accordance with the following principles—

- **Equity.** In keeping with the federal role to promote equity in education, these funds must be targeted to serve high-need students and high-need schools, so that all students have equal access to effective teachers and leaders.
- **Rigor.** We urge you to use the competitive process to fund high-quality educator training programs rather than spreading resources widely and thinly. In this context, high-quality programs are those that are selective in admissions, with a strong clinical training component, that tie graduation or certification to improved student learning. This will ensure that a high bar is set for grantees and ensure funds seed true innovation.
- **Funding.** We believe the great majority of these funds should be awarded to states, districts, and non-profits, rather than being held at the federal level. This would ensure that the impact of federal funds extends to students and schools as much as possible.

Supporting the Title II set-aside is crucial to investing in the effectiveness of our educator workforce and thus the future of our nation's students. We urge you to authorize and fund the set-aside at the requested level.

Sincerely,

Center for American Progress Action Fund
 NewSchools Venture Fund
 50CAN: The 50-State Campaign for Achievement Now
 Advance Illinois
 Aspire Public Schools
 AUSL (Academy for Urban School Leadership)

Black Alliance for Educational Options
Chalkboard Project
Charter School Growth Fund
Connecticut Coalition for Achievement Now
Democrats for Education Reform
The Education Trust
E.L. Haynes Public Charter School
Green Dot Public Schools
Jason Glass, State Director & Chief Learner, Iowa Department of Education
Jason Kamras, Chief, Office of Human Capital, District of Columbia Public Schools
Jean-Claude Brizard, Chief Executive Officer, Chicago Public Schools
KIPP
MarylandCAN: The Maryland Campaign for Achievement Now
Mass Insight Education
Match Charter Public High School
Melora Sundt, Vice Dean, USC Rossier School of Education
MinnCAN: The Minnesota Campaign for Achievement Now
Mississippi First
National Alliance for Public Charter Schools
National Center for Alternative Certification
National Council of Teachers of Mathematics
National Council on Teacher Quality
National Science Teachers Association
New Leaders
New Schools for New Orleans
The New Teacher Project
NYCAN: The New York Campaign for Achievement Now
PennCAN: The Pennsylvania Campaign for Achievement Now
Relay Graduate School of Education
RI-CAN: The Rhode Island Campaign for Achievement
School Leaders Network
Stand for Children
Students for Education Reform
StudentsFirst
Teach For America
Teach Plus
Urban Education Institute at the University of Chicago
Urban Teacher Center
Urban Teacher Residency United

cc: Members of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education, and Related Agencies