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May 25, 2017

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Dear Member of Congress:

On behalf of the Committee for Education Funding (CEF), the nation's oldest and largest education coalition of more than 110 education institutions and organizations reflecting the broad range of the education community, we write to strongly oppose President Trump's fiscal year (FY) 2018 budget. The budget disinvests in education along the entire continuum, cutting \$9.2 billion compared with the new funding Congress provided in 2017. It cuts federal support for preschoolers, students in elementary school, children who use afterschool programs, high schoolers seeking preparation for the workforce, adult learners, teachers and school leaders, schools and institutions, and low-income Americans who rely on federal aid to go to college. The President's budget also eliminates funding for education-related services including libraries and museums, and cuts student loans by \$143 billion over ten years.

The size and scope of the President's education cuts are devastating. Investments in education currently account for only about 2 percent of the federal budget, but the President's FY 2018 budget reduces the share for education to 1.8 percent as part of its deep, multi-year cut in nondefense discretionary funding. The budget's drastic cuts to the federal investment in education will weaken student achievement, worsen the opportunity gap, withdraw needed support that helps students graduate from high school ready for a career or for college, and make college less affordable and attainable.

Instead of using the President's budget as a starting point for funding negotiations, we urge you instead to first address the need to raise the austerity level sequester caps on nondefense discretionary funding, which for FY 2018 is below the level Congress provided for FY 2017. Eliminating the sequester caps and maintaining the long-standing principle of parity –

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by matching increases in defense and nondefense discretionary caps that has been in place since the sequester went into effect – will allow Congress to increase the federal education investment to maximize opportunities for students and their families, schools, and our nation.

Investing in education pays dividends immediately and in the long term. We urge you to reject the President's harmful education cuts and start with a level of nondefense funding that allows needed investments in education that will benefit us all.

Sincerely,



Jocelyn Bissonnette  
President



Sheryl Cohen  
Executive Director