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July 12, 2016

The Honorable Harold Rogers, Chairman
The Honorable Nita M. Lowey, Vice Chairwoman
House Appropriations Committee
H-305 Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tom Cole, Chairman
The Honorable Rose DeLauro, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education, and Related Agencies
House Appropriations Committee
2358-B Rayburn Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Cole and Ranking Member DeLauro:

On behalf of the Committee for Education Funding (CEF), a coalition of 116 national education associations and institutions spanning early learning to postgraduate education, we are writing to voice our concerns regarding the Labor-HHS-Education appropriations bill that was passed out of the Subcommittee on July 7th. We are keenly aware of the difficult budget limitations the Subcommittee endeavored to balance, and commend your leadership in moving the appropriations process forward. CEF continues to emphasize the importance of eliminating the discretionary funding caps, as robust investment in education is essential to our nation's economic viability.

We recognize that some programs received modest increases, and we are encouraged by the level of funding allocated for ESSA's new Title IV block grant but we also acknowledge the limited additional investments to IDEA grants, Impact Aid, Indian Education, TRIO, and GEAR UP. We strongly believe that these nominal investments are insufficient to fund the full array of programs necessary to help students attain their full potential. Furthermore, while we are pleased the Committee retained the funding from the now eliminated School

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Improvement Grants (SIG) program and moves it through the Title I formula, we remain concerned that such an allocation still translates into a \$200 million shortfall at the local district level.

CEF is deeply worried about the \$1.3 billion that was taken from the Pell Grant reserve fund and the precedent that it sets, along with the cut to the Pell program's annual appropriation. We were further disappointed by the lack of restoration of year-round Pell Grants, which was included in the Senate Labor-HHS-Education appropriations bill earlier this year.

Finally, funding for numerous programs in this bill was reduced, frozen, or eliminated altogether. It was mentioned at the markup that there were "more than two dozen education programs that saw their funding reduced or completely eliminated in this bill." This includes both the Magnet Schools Assistance program and the Education Innovation and Research program that have both been zeroed out, despite receiving tens of millions of dollars in FY 2016. The extensive negative impact of these budget decisions is avoidable by lifting the caps that are causing pressing funding constraints.

We strongly urge Congress to eliminate the discretionary caps in order to fund our nation's education programs at adequate levels. Educational attainment is strongly tied to individual success and the growth, vitality, and innovation of our nation's economic strength. Congress must work toward advancing the resources necessary to provide the best possible opportunities for students, their families, and our country.

Sincerely,



Makese Motley
President



Sheryl Cohen
Executive Director