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September 12, 2017

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader, U.S. Senate
S-230 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader, U.S. Senate
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator McConnell and Senator Schumer:

On behalf of the Committee for Education Funding (CEF), a coalition of 114 national education associations and institutions spanning the education continuum from early learning to postgraduate education to adult education and education enhancements, we are writing to thank the Appropriations Committee Leadership for supporting education in the Appropriations Committee's fiscal year 2018 bill September 7. We commend the Committee for producing a bipartisan bill, but the difficult budget limitations the Subcommittee and full Committee endeavored to balance only highlight the need for Congress to eliminate the sequester-level discretionary caps.

We are pleased that the bill provides small funding increases to a handful of programs, but are concerned that the fiscal year 2018 funding levels are only possible because of an offsetting rescission of \$2.6 billion in previously appropriated funding for Pell grants. That rescission could jeopardize the Pell grant program's ability to continue to support student access to college given the uncertainty of changing economic conditions and demand as well as the future federal resources.

We understand that the bill's austere allocation is still a placeholder, and that the non-defense total across all of the Committee's funding bills violates the discretionary cap for fiscal year 2018. As work continues this fall on budget issues including final fiscal year 2018 funding, CEF encourages Congress to eliminate the sequester-level discretionary caps and maintain the long-standing principle of parity by matching any increases in the defense caps with equal increases in non-defense caps. Eliminating sequestration caps

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would allow Congress to make investments that are essential to our nation's security for both nondefense and defense programs.

Educational attainment is inextricably tied to both individual success and the nation's economic strength. Students and schools are counting on strong federal education investments to ensure equitable access to high quality education from preschool to higher education and career and technical and adult education, and to fill gaps where local and state funding is insufficient or where new needs arise. We strongly urge Congress to repeal the Budget Control Act sequester-level caps and significantly increase the federal education investment in order to maximize opportunities for students and their families, schools, and our nation.

Sincerely,



Jocelyn Bissonnette
President



Sheryl Cohen
Executive Director

cc: Appropriations Chairman Thad Cochran
Appropriations Vice Chairman Patrick Leahy
Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor-HHS-Education Chairman Blunt
Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor-HHS-Education Ranking Member Murray