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Committee for Education Funding

September 17, 2019

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the more than 110 education organizations and institutions that are members of the Committee for Education Funding (CEF), we strongly oppose the Senate Appropriations Committee decision to freeze funding for the fiscal year (FY) 2020 Labor-HHS-Education appropriations bill at the FY 2019 level. The Committee's party-line vote to provide a mere 0.1 percent increase for the Labor-HHS-Education bill that contains one third of all non-defense discretionary spending does not reflect the bipartisan vote earlier this year to enact an overall \$27 billion increase in non-defense appropriations. Year after year, the Labor-HHS-Education bill has failed to get its proportional share of funding increases even though it supports education and other programs that are key to future economic growth, family security, and health. We urge the Senate to revise the 302(b) allocations for the 12 government funding bills to allow for necessary investments in vital education programs.

The need for investment in education programs grows each year but tight caps on non-defense discretionary funding led the federal government to under invest in education in recent years. In fact, current FY 2019 discretionary resources for the Department of Education are below the FY 2018 level and are more than \$7 billion below the FY 2011 level in inflation-adjusted terms. The many years of funding cuts and freezes have left many education programs insufficiently funded to fulfill their intended goals and meet student needs. These impacts are felt in classrooms, colleges, and education programs throughout the nation. There are education needs across the entire education continuum, including early childhood education, elementary and secondary education, higher education, career technical and adult education, and out-of-school educational providers such as libraries and museums.

A decision to freeze funding for the Labor-HHS-Education funding bill means that any increased investments in education come at the cost of offsetting cuts to the bill's other important programs. Such a decision is shortsighted in terms of what is necessary to develop a strong future workforce and a well-educated

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populace ready to compete in a fast-paced global environment. Education funding accounts for less than 2 percent of the federal budget – an already low investment that should be increased, not frozen or cut.

CEF, the nation's oldest and largest education coalition, is a non-partisan and non-profit organization reflecting the entire education continuum whose members are parents and students, teachers and school leaders, counselors, school board members, universities and school districts, associations and others with the common goal of ensuring that education is adequately funded. CEF urges you to revise the allocations to provide the Labor-HHS-Education bill at least its one-third proportional share of the \$27 billion increase that Congress has already approved for non-defense programs for FY 2020.

Sincerely,



Stephanie Giesecke
President



Sheryl Cohen
Executive Director