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October 11, 2019

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Dear Senators:

On behalf of the more than 110 education organizations and institutions that are members of the Committee for Education Funding (CEF), we write to express our concern that the fiscal year (2020) Labor-HHS-Education appropriations bill released on September 18 does not use any of the funding under the higher cap on non-defense discretionary to increase the overall investment in education. We urge you to revise the Subcommittee's allocation – its 302(b) funding level – to provide a substantial increase rather than its current virtual freeze at the FY 2019 level, and to then revise the bill to make long-needed new investments in education programs.

The Committee's party-line vote to provide a mere 0.1 percent increase for the Labor-HHS-Education bill that contains 30 percent 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 and education programs have seen their funding cut and frozen for years, even though these programs are key to student achievement, job success, and future economic growth. 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 proposed FY 2020 bill cuts net discretionary Education funding even further, with funding for most education programs frozen at the FY 2019 level.

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.

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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 30-percent proportional share of the \$27 billion increase that Congress has already approved for non-defense programs, and to increase vital investments in education.

Sincerely,



Stephanie Giesecke
President



Sheryl Cohen
Executive Director