



October 25, 2017

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S-230 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Paul Ryan
Speaker of the House
H-232 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

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

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Democratic Leader, The House
H-204 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Members of Congress:

On behalf of the 114 national education organizations and institutions who are members of the Committee for Education Funding (CEF), we urge you to permanently 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 the non-defense discretionary (NDD) caps. Congress must eliminate the sequestration caps in order to make critical investments in both defense and NDD programs, including education, which are essential to our nation's security and prosperity.

CEF, the nation's oldest and largest education coalition, is a non-partisan organization reflecting the continuum of the education community, from early learning to postgraduate education to adult education and education enhancements. CEF advocates on behalf of increasing federal investments in education because they are vital to building a stronger nation, spurring economic growth, and creating a well-educated populace ready to succeed in the global environment. CEF's "5¢ Makes Sense" campaign provides evidence behind the effectiveness of investing along the entire education continuum, with the goal of increasing education investments to five percent of the federal budget. The U.S. currently spends only two cents of every federal dollar on education, and funding for the Department of Education discretionary programs is still below what it was seven years ago, excluding the Pell Grant program. These cuts to education investments are due in part to the constraints

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of the austerity level discretionary spending caps in place since sequestration went into effect in fiscal year 2013.

Because the sequester level spending caps are too low, Congress has raised the caps on defense and NDD funding by equal amounts for the last four years. That brings us to fiscal year 2018, when the NDD cap is cut by \$3 billion in nominal terms and by \$16 billion in inflation-adjusted terms. The House lowered that tight level by another \$5 billion in its omnibus funding bill, leading to harmful cuts to education and workforce development programs.

We urge Congress to use the opportunity before the continuing resolution expires on December 8 to eliminate the sequester-level caps. This will allow Congress to make necessary investments in NDD programs, including education and related 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 encourage Congress to use the time it has this fall to repeal the Budget Control Act sequester-level caps and significantly increase the federal education investment to maximize opportunities for students and their families, schools, and our nation.

Sincerely,



Jocelyn Bissonnette
President



Sheryl Cohen
Executive Director

cc:

The Honorable Thad Cochran, Chairman, Senate Appropriations Committee
The Honorable Patrick Leahy, Ranking Member, Senate Appropriations Committee
The Honorable Rodney Frelinghuysen, Chairman, House Appropriations Committee
The Honorable Nita Lowey, Ranking Member, House Appropriations Committee
The Honorable Roy Blunt, Chairman, Senate Labor-HHS-Education Subcommittee
The Honorable Patty Murray, Ranking Member, Senate Labor-HHS-Education Subcommittee
The Honorable Tom Cole, Chairman, House Labor-HHS-Education Subcommittee
The Honorable Rosa DeLauro, Ranking Member, House Labor-HHS-Education Subcommittee