May 17, 2022

The Honorable Christopher Coons
Chairman
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
SD-127
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Lindsey Graham
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
SD-190
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Coons and Ranking Member Graham:

Thank you for your ongoing bipartisan commitment to fighting poverty and improving education for children in need around the world. We are writing to urge you to provide strong support for Basic Education in the fiscal year 2023 State and Foreign Operations Appropriations bill, including funding for U.S. Government international education programs, the Global Partnership for Education, and Education Cannot Wait.

The need for international education assistance has increased exponentially as nearly all children have had their education disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The latest World Bank estimates show that global learning poverty - the proportion of 10-year-olds unable to read a short, age-appropriate text - could increase from 53 percent to around 70 percent of children living in low- and middle-income countries. Furthermore, learning loss, increased dropout, poor nutrition, and social isolation all threaten the ability of children and youth to complete their education on time and lead healthy, peaceful, and successful lives, with specific concern for girls and children with disabilities who are more susceptible to education disruptions. If left unaddressed, the long-term ramifications of inaction at the global level are real and severe, as lower educational attainment can lead to less economic opportunity and worse health outcomes. Education is an essential lifeline in times of crisis, and investments in international education are needed to mitigate the harmful effects of the pandemic on the lives of children and youth.

U.S. international basic education programs strive to increase access to quality education; to provide children with foundational reading, math, social and emotional learning skills; and to prepare youth for successful careers in 57 countries. To further help students recover from the harmful effects of COVID-19 globally and to return to learning, U.S. foreign assistance needs to build upon and enhance current efforts to re-engage all learners, assess and address learning loss, support educators, provide psychosocial and protection services, and increase emergency preparedness and response capacity in partner countries.

U.S. support for multilateral partnerships, including the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) and Education Cannot Wait (ECW), complements our bilateral programs and leverages additional resources for this important work. GPE mobilized $500 million in accelerated funding support to help developing countries mitigate both the immediate and long-term disruptions to education caused by the COVID-19 pandemic by supporting educational opportunities for up to
355 million children in 67 countries. Through ECW’s first emergency rapid response, multi-year funding platforms, and the COVID-19 education emergency response, ECW has reached over 29.2 million children and more than 88,000 teachers in 34 countries.

To sustain and enhance international efforts to support learning during and after COVID-19, it will be imperative for the Subcommittee to fully fund Basic Education in the fiscal year 2023 State and Foreign Operations Appropriations bill. We greatly appreciate your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

Chris Van Hollen  
United States Senator

Christopher S. Murphy  
United States Senator

Thomas R. Carper  
United States Senator

Margaret Wood Hassan  
United States Senator

Alex Padilla  
United States Senator

Benjamin L. Cardin  
United States Senator

Sherrod Brown  
United States Senator

Tina Smith  
United States Senator
Cory A. Booker  
United States Senator

Tim Kaine  
United States Senator

Raphael G. Warnock  
United States Senator

Debbie Stabenow  
United States Senator

Ron Wyden  
United States Senator

Tammy Baldwin  
United States Senator

Elizabeth Warren  
United States Senator

Ben Ray Luján  
United States Senator

Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senator

Gary C. Peters  
United States Senator
Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator

Jack Reed
United States Senator

Maria Cantwell
United States Senator

Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator

Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator

Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator

Jacky Rosen
United States Senator

Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator

Mark Kelly
United States Senator

Edward J. Markey
United States Senator
Martin Heinrich  
United States Senator  

Sheldon Whitehouse  
United States Senator  

Robert Menendez  
United States Senator  

Jeffrey A. Merkley  
United States Senator  

Robert P. Casey, Jr.  
United States Senator