

July 17, 2017

The Honorable Rodney Frelinghuysen
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Nita M. Lowey
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chairman
Subcommittee on the Departments of Labor,
Health and Human Services, Education, and
Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Rosa L. DeLauro
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on the Departments of Labor,
Health and Human Services, Education, and
Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Frelinghuysen, Ranking Member Lowey, Chairman Cole, and Ranking Member DeLauro:

An investment in teachers is an investment in the future of our students and our nation. Decades of research has proven that the most important school-based factor in student achievement is the effectiveness of a teacher.¹ A 2011 study showed that increasing the quality of a poorly performing teacher's classroom instruction would increase his or her students' lifetime income by \$250,000.² To power our economy and ensure all students graduate high school with the skills for success in college or a job, we must invest in a supported and effective teacher workforce.

We therefore write to express strong opposition to the elimination of the Supporting Effective Instruction State Grants Program (Title II-A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)) proposed in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2018 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education (LHHS) Appropriations bill. Currently funded at more than \$2 billion, Title II-A is the largest federal funding stream that directly supports teachers and school leaders. We reject efforts to reduce the federal deficit on the backs of our nation's teachers and the 50 million students they serve.

In 2015, Congress passed the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), the bipartisan reauthorization of the ESEA, and Congress must follow through on our promise by fully funding ESSA

¹ Hightower, A., Delgado, R., Lloyd, S., Wittenstein, R., Sellers, K., & Swanson, C. (2011). "Improving student learning by supporting quality teaching: Key issues, effective strategies." Bethesda, MD: Editorial Projects in Education, Inc.

² Chetty, R., Friedman, J., Rockoff, J. (2011). "Measuring the Impacts of Teachers I: Evaluating Bias in Teacher Value-Added Estimates." American Economic Review, 104(9): 2593-2632.

programs, including Title II-A, at the authorized amounts. Despite pledges by President Trump and Secretary DeVos to support implementation of the new law, states and school districts will already suffer lower ESEA title program funding amounts due to cuts in H.R. 244, the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2017. ESSA implementation is now in full-swing, but implementing ESSA without adequate federal funding threatens the civil rights legacy of the law, undermines the intent of Congress, and jeopardizes the ability of states and school districts to deliver on the promise of an excellent education for more than 50 million students. Eliminating Title II-A will result not only in thousands of layoffs and larger class sizes across the country, but also stifle innovation in the delivery of teacher professional development and improved classroom instruction. In school year 2015-16, 52% of program funds supported professional development activities for teachers, school leaders, administrators, and paraprofessionals, and 25% of funds went to hire teachers to reduce class size.³

Following through on Secretary DeVos' priority to defund Title II-A would impact teachers and students in nearly every classroom across the country, since 98% of school districts receive Title II, Part A funds.⁴ Program elimination will have an especially negative impact on schools serving low-income and minority students, which have a concentration of inexperienced teachers and disproportionately face teacher shortages.⁵ Title II-A funds are essential in slowing the revolving door of inexperienced teachers that educate our nation's most vulnerable students.

It is Congress' responsibility to support ESSA implementation through funding ESSA programs. We must continue Title II-A investments to support teachers, school leaders, and paraprofessionals, improve instruction, and ensure that all students graduate high school poised for lifelong success.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

ROBERT C. "BOBBY" SCOTT

Ranking Member,
Committee on Education and the Workforce

JARED POLIS

Ranking Member, Subcommittee on
Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary
Education

³ U.S. Department of Education (2016). "Findings from the 2015-16 Survey on the Use of Funds under Title II, Part A."

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Dee, T. and Goldhaber, D. (2017). "Understanding and Addressing Teacher Shortages in the United States." Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, the Hamilton Project.
