

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 8, 2018

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Chairman
Senate Appropriations Committee
Room S-128, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Vice Chairman
Senate Appropriations Committee
Room S-146A, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Chairman
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, Education and
and Related Agencies
Senate Appropriations Committee
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, Education
and Related Agencies
Senate Appropriations Committee
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Cochran, Vice Chairman Leahy, Chairman Blunt and Ranking Member Murray:

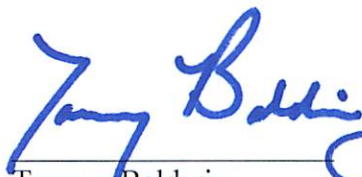
As you work to finalize funding for fiscal year (FY) 2018, we urge you to increase the Senate's investment in both school climate and safety programs. Our nation's schools are increasingly thrust into the forefront in the response to two crises that endanger the health and wellbeing of America's youth: the opioid epidemic and gun violence. As of the date of this letter, there have been 12 shootings in American schools this year, according to an analysis by CNN, and we are only two months into 2018. According to the Department of Health and Human Services, in 2016, there were 63,600 drug overdose deaths in the United States, equivalent to 174 individuals dying each day, and 92,000 children were removed from their homes in FY16 because at least one parent had a substance use issue. Congress cannot ignore these disturbing trends. It is more important now than ever that, in addition to both broadly combating the opioid crisis and passing strong gun safety reforms, schools have the resources to help their students be safe and healthy, as well as cope with the trauma associated with gun violence in their communities. Therefore, we ask for the highest possible funding for the Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grant under Title IV-A of the Every Student Succeeds Act.

While we are aware of the numerous priorities you must address, Congress needs to convey a strong message about the importance of funding school health, climate and safety activities. Under the Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grant, schools can utilize funds for activities such as providing school-based health and mental health services and counseling, implementing systems and practices to prevent bullying and harassment, supporting trauma-informed classroom management, and establishing community partnerships. School districts can also use funds to improve school safety, including training school personnel in school-based violence prevention strategies and developing relationship building skills among students to help improve safety and prevent violence.

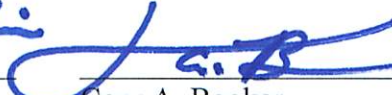
As a formula-based program focused on the flexible, locally-determined use of funds, the Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grant is well suited to ensuring that a large number of districts have resources they can direct in a manner that best addresses their particular needs in supporting student health and safety, a well-rounded education, and the effective use of educational technology.

While funding for school safety cannot replace meaningful, strong gun safety reforms, as our nation faces these crises, we must answer the call of parents, educators, and students to provide schools and educators with the resources they need to meet these challenges and keep their students safe and healthy. We appreciate your ongoing commitment to elementary and secondary education and ask that you continue to support our children by honoring the Senate's commitment to the Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grant program. Specifically, we ask that you fund this program at the highest possible level in the FY 2018 appropriations measure. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator



Cory A. Booker
United States Senator



Bill Nelson
United States Senator



Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



Maria Cantwell
United States Senator



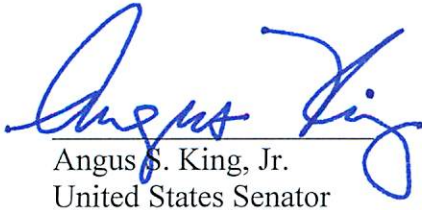
Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator




Tim Kaine
United States Senator



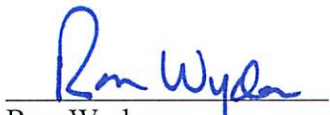
Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator



Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator



Michael Bennet
United States Senator


Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator


Tina Smith
United States Senator


Ron Wyden
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Kirsten Gillibrand
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Sherrod Brown
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Ed Markey
United States Senator


Chris Van Hollen
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Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator


Martin Heinrich
United States Senator

Mark R Warner

Mark R. Warner
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Ben Cardin

Benjamin L. Cardin
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Doug Jones
United States Senator

Robert Menendez

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Tammy Duckworth

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United States Senator

Chris Coons

Christopher A. Coons
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