

Advocates for Literacy

April 12, 2016

Honorable Roy Blunt
Chairman
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and
Human Services, and Education
Senate Appropriations Committee
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and
Human Services, and Education
Senate Appropriations Committee
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Blunt and Ranking Member Murray:

On behalf of Advocates for Literacy, a coalition of over 65 organizations focused on increasing the federal commitment to improve literacy instruction through evidenced-based practices, thank you for your past support of the Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy (SRCL) program and for providing \$190 million in funding for the program in Fiscal Year (FY) 2016 Omnibus spending bill. Advocates for Literacy asks for your support for a \$190 million appropriation in FY 2017 for SRCL's successor, the Literacy for All, Results for the Nation (LEARN) program, authorized under Title IIB of the *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA).

The newly authorized LEARN program builds on the success of the SRCL program. LEARN provides competitive grants to States to help local school districts develop comprehensive literacy instruction plans focused on ensuring high-quality instruction and evidence-based intervention strategies for all students from birth through grade twelve. School districts will use federal funds to support high-quality professional development for teachers, teacher leaders, principals and specialized instructional support personnel to improve literacy instruction for struggling readers and writers, including English language learners and students with disabilities. LEARN is the only targeted federal literacy funding for birth-through-grade-twelve teacher professional development and research-based interventions for students who cannot read and write well enough to progress in school through high school graduation.

Research clearly demonstrates that a high-quality, literacy-rich environment beginning in early childhood is one of the most important factors in determining school readiness and success, high school graduation, college access and success, and workforce readiness. Graduating globally competent citizens depends on students using reading and writing skills to develop important abilities in such areas as math, science, and technology.

A strong federal commitment to literacy is imperative to ensure this nation's students graduate from high school with the skills needed to succeed in postsecondary education and the workforce. Advocates for Literacy urge you to provide funding in the FY 2017 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education appropriations bill for the LEARN program to support reading and writing achievement, so more students graduate from high school with the skills needed for success in higher education, work, and civic life.

Thank you for your consideration of this request, and we hope we can count on your support.

Sincerely,

Advocates for Literacy

1. Academic Language Therapy Association
2. ACT
3. Advocacy Institute
4. Alliance for Excellent Education
5. American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education
6. American Federation of Teachers
7. American Occupational Therapy Association
8. Association for Career and Technical Education
9. Association of American Publishers
10. Association on Higher Education and Disability
11. Association for Middle Level Education
12. American School Counselor Association
13. Council for Exceptional Children
14. Education Northwest
15. Early Care and Education Consortium
16. Easter Seals
17. Every Child Reading
18. First Five Year Fund
19. First Focus Campaign for Children
20. Grimes Reading Institute
21. Higher Education Consortium
22. HighScope Educational Research Foundation
23. Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY)
24. Institute for Educational Leadership
25. International Dyslexia Association
26. International Literacy Association
27. Keys to Literacy
28. Knowledge Alliance
29. Learning Ally
30. Learning Disabilities Association of America
31. Literacy How, Inc
32. National Adolescent Literacy Coalition
33. National Association for the Education of Young Children
34. National Association of Elementary School Principals
35. National Association of School Psychologists

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36. National Association of Secondary School Principals
37. National Association of State Boards of Education
38. National Association of State Directors of Special Education
39. National Black Child Development Institute
40. National Center for Families Learning
41. National Center for Learning Disabilities
42. National Coalition for Literacy
43. National Council of Teachers of English
44. National Down Syndrome Congress
45. National Down Syndrome Society
46. National Education Association
47. National Forum to Accelerate Middle-Grades Reform
48. National Head Start Association
49. National Title I Association
50. National Urban Alliance for Effective Education
51. National Women's Law Center
52. National Writing Project
53. Nemours Children's Health System
54. Parent Child Home Program
55. Parents as Teachers
56. Reading Partners
57. Reading Recovery Council of North America
58. Scholastic Inc.
59. School Social Work Association of America
60. TASH
61. TESOL International Association
62. The Arc
63. United Cerebral Palsy
64. United Way Worldwide
65. WestEd
66. ZERO TO THREE