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June 15, 2018

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chairman

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member

Subcommittee on Labor, Health & Human Services, Education & Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

RE: Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies Appropriations for Fiscal Year 2019

Dear Chairman Cole and Ranking Member DeLauro:

On behalf of our state associations and the 90,000 school board members who govern our country's 14,000 local school districts, the National School Boards Association (NSBA) acknowledges your leadership and bipartisan support for a Fiscal Year 2019 appropriations measure that will prioritize Prek-12 education investments in our nation's 50 million public school students.

We urge your leadership to sustain and strengthen the programs that will help our public schools fulfill the goals of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the Perkins Career and Technical Education Act, and those for related programs critical to safe and secure schools that advance educational opportunities vital to student achievement. This federal support provided by Congress is paramount as our school districts develop local plans for ESSA implementation, with the majority of consolidated state plans having been approved by the U.S. Department of Education. In addition, the solid federal investments needed to strengthen support for students with disabilities, advance innovation and career-readiness, and ensure a well-rounded education for all students, inclusive of crisis prevention and disaster preparedness is no longer a desired goal: This must be the reality for our public schools that are the bedrock of our communities.

We applaud the provisions in your Subcommittee Mark to increase appropriations for Impact Aid, Title IV Student Support and Academic Enrichment, Career and Technical Education and Head Start. However, we urge a greater investment in IDEA, as this measure would provide funding of approximately 14 percent of the national average per pupil expenditure for the more than six million students with disabilities. With costs for most individualized education plans exceeding this amount exponentially~especially for students affected by catastrophic cases~we urge you prioritize IDEA investments for FY2019 and future fiscal years.

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Investments maintained in Title I grants for disadvantaged students are reflected in this measure to help advance the range of choices that our public school districts offer to 90 percent of our nation's students, such as magnet schools, and specialized curricula for science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). As the primary resource for providing the additional academic supports needed to more than 24 million students in our communities, Title I grants help close achievement gaps and equip our students with the knowledge and skills needed for success in college and the workforce. Title I program outcomes have indicated increased proficiency levels in reading and mathematics and help raise graduation rates.

As all levels of government are committed to addressing school safety, we urge you to restore funding for Safe Schools and Citizenship national programs that would be used for interventions and referrals for mental health supports for at-risk students. Additionally, we are grateful that this bill would reserve funding for the Project SERV program that is helping our students and districts recover from violent, traumatic events that have disrupted learning environments.

We urge that you sustain the \$350 million that was appropriated in final FY2018 appropriations for Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF), helping correct loan repayments for teachers and others who were assigned to the wrong student loan program. With teacher shortages affecting several communities throughout the country, as well as for certain subject areas, investments such as this are needed to help our districts attract and retain highly effective teachers and school leaders. Likewise, the Subcommittee Mark to retain Title II programs is appreciated, especially with other proposals that have recommended the elimination of this much-needed investment in teacher preparation, class-size reduction initiatives, civics education, and education innovation and research.

This bill's provisions to prohibit eliminations to the U.S. Department of Education Budget Service are needed. Likewise, we also urge the inclusion of provisions to sustain the Department's Office of English Language Acquisition (OELA) and Privacy Technical Assistance Center (PTAC), as both are necessary to support the progress in achieving greater educational equity for English Learners and to equip education stakeholders with data privacy solutions and security practices related to student-level longitudinal data systems.

As you complete the work for a final appropriations measure for FY2019, NSBA appreciates your attention to these and other priorities that make a positive difference in student outcomes and in our communities each day.

Sincerely,



Thomas J. Gentzel
Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer