

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 20, 2010

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Chairman
Subcommittee on State,
Foreign Operations and Related Programs
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Judd Gregg
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on State,
Foreign Operations and Related Programs
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman and Senator Gregg:

We are writing to express our sincere appreciation for your longstanding leadership in providing funding for basic education programs and we urge you to continue that support in the fiscal year 2011 State and Foreign Operations Appropriations bill.

As you know, UNESCO has recently estimated that the international community faces a \$16 billion funding gap to meet the internationally agreed upon goal of universal basic education by 2015. Because of this shortfall, there are currently 72 million out-of-school children and 759 million adults around the world who lack basic literacy and numeracy skills.

Improving the well-being of the world's poor is a humanitarian and moral imperative. But it also serves our own interests by widening opportunities for trade and commerce and lifting nations out of poverty and spurring economic growth. As the world struggles to emerge from the global economic downturn, education is more important than ever.

A significant U.S. investment in international basic education also directly enhances our national security. In war-torn regions and fragile states, education enables children to make reasoned decisions about their lives and futures and offers a path away from despair and hopelessness.

Perhaps most importantly, education actually saves lives. Education has been shown to lower child and maternal mortality rates, increase life expectancy, and significantly decrease vulnerability to HIV/AIDS and other deadly diseases. It also facilitates a basic understanding of health, sanitation, and child care.

For these reasons, we strongly urge your Subcommittee to provide the maximum possible funding for basic education in the fiscal year 2011 State and Foreign Operations Appropriations bill.

We appreciate your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

Dianne Feinstein

Barack Obama

Kirsten E. Gillibrand

Sally Chaudhry

Daniel K. Akaka

Whitman

Mark Taper

Robert Menendez

Jon Kyl

Sherrill Brown

Carl Levin

Richard W. Burr

Bob Casey, Jr.

Chris Dodd