

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

October 24, 2019

The Honorable Alex M. Azar II
Secretary
U.S. Department of Health & Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

The Honorable Betsy DeVos
Secretary
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20202

Dear Secretaries Azar and DeVos:

We strongly endorse Maryland's application for the Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five (PDG B-5) Renewal Grant. Last December, the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) successfully won and began administering the \$10.6 million PDG B-5 Initial Grant. Working collaboratively with the Maryland Department of Human Services (DHS) and Maryland Department of Health (MDH), the three agencies held eighteen Town Halls across the state as part of a statewide, comprehensive prenatal through five needs assessment. Survey results from 1,281 parents, providers, teachers, community leaders and other stakeholders in multiple languages were also collected. In four regions of the state, parents and early childhood educators participated in seventeen focus groups; three of them were held in Spanish. The final needs assessment report was distributed throughout the state and is being used through community roundtables and other public input to create Maryland's prenatal to age five strategic plan.

In addition to the needs assessment and strategic planning, Maryland used the Initial Grant to provide funding and training in *Results Based Accountability* for all 24 local Early Childhood Advisory Councils; training and coaching for 200 educators on *Children Study their World*, Maryland's new integrated curriculum for 4-year-olds; modernization of the early childhood data system; support family home and center-based child care programs to attain higher levels of quality through Maryland EXCELS; conduct a Higher Education Inventory; and expand professional learning and supports to address the needs of English Learners and children with disabilities.

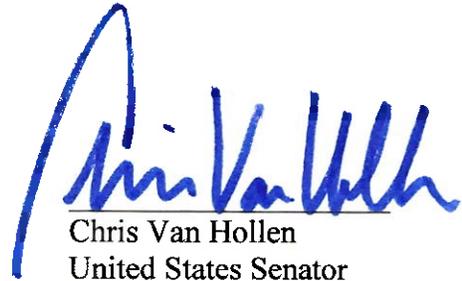
Maryland has been forward thinking in centralizing the majority of its early childhood programs in a mixed delivery system at MSDE, while maintaining strong collaborations across agencies to coordinate programs and services to best support vulnerable families and help all children enter kindergarten prepared to succeed. The B-5 Renewal Grant will assist the State in leveraging and coordinating federal, state and local early care and education investments to provide equitable access to the critical services and programs they need.

This new funding opportunity would allow Maryland to build on the successes of the first year while expanding new high-quality opportunities for young learners, especially children from birth to age three. We encourage you to continue your investment in Maryland's children and give our state favorable consideration for a B-5 Renewal Grant.

Sincerely,



Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator



Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



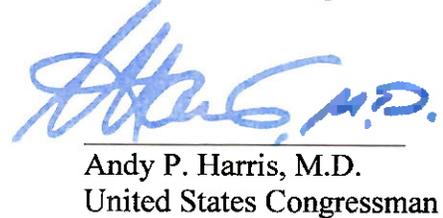
Steny H. Hoyer
United States Congressman



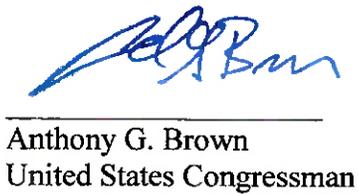
C.A. Dutch Ruppersberger
United States Congressman



John P. Sarbanes
United States Congressman



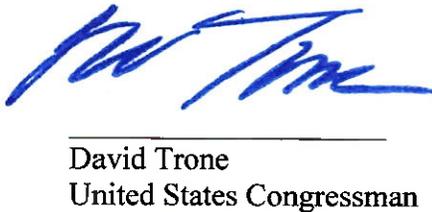
Andy P. Harris, M.D.
United States Congressman



Anthony G. Brown
United States Congressman



Jamie B. Raskin
United States Congressman



David Trone
United States Congressman