

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 13, 2018

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Chair
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and
Human Services, Education, and
Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

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

Dear Chairman Blunt and Ranking Member Murray,

We write to express our support for the U.S. Department of Labor's YouthBuild program in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2019 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations Bill. We respectfully request that you provide sufficient funding for this important program.

Our nation's ability to reconnect unemployed and undereducated young adults is essential to our economic success. YouthBuild programs engage disadvantaged, low-income youth in a holistic, full-time program with equal emphasis on education and hands-on, productive job training, coupled with personal counseling and mentoring, leadership development, and opportunities to serve the community.

Young people between the ages of 16 and 24, who left high school without a diploma, apply and enroll in YouthBuild for an average of ten months. The program includes an equal division between helping them earn their high school diploma or equivalent and teaching job skills by building affordable housing for homeless and low-income people in their communities. In addition to construction, some young people train for jobs in other growing sectors, such as healthcare, technology, and customer service.

Since YouthBuild began as a federal program in 1992, over 160,000 students in 44 states have built more than 35,000 units of affordable housing in low-income communities and performed more than 49.5 million hours of community service. The U.S. Department of Labor manages this program with heavy focus on performance, providing ample evidence that YouthBuild works. Moreover, local programs are required to raise a 25 percent non-federal match, leveraging private funds to maximize impact.

Currently, there are 147 national grantees operating YouthBuild programs, but there are three times more applicants than capacity, indicating the significant need for additional federal support for this critical program. Nationwide, there are at least 5.6 million 16 to 24 year olds who are neither in school nor employed, half of whom are from low-income communities. Every year, hundreds of thousands of young people leave high school without a diploma. We strongly believe that adequate

funding for YouthBuild is an effective, strategic investment in putting these disconnected youth on a path to success while building an educated, connected, and skilled workforce.

We hope that the Committee will provide sufficient funding for the Department of Labor YouthBuild program. As always, we appreciate your consideration of our request, and thank you for your previous support of YouthBuild's work and mission.

Sincerely,



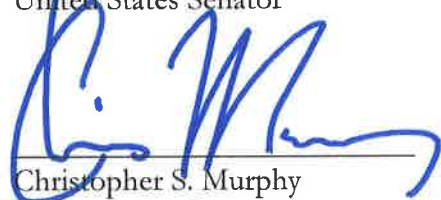
Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator



Dean Heller
United States Senator



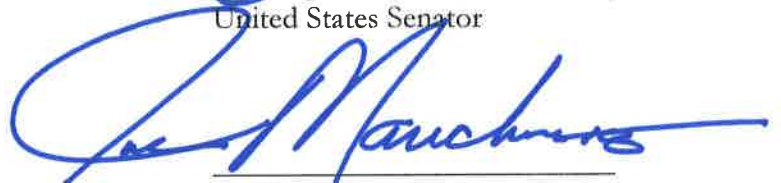
Tammy Duckworth
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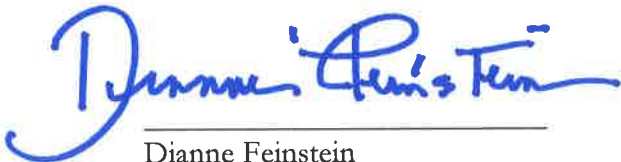
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Margaret Wood Hassan
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United States Senator



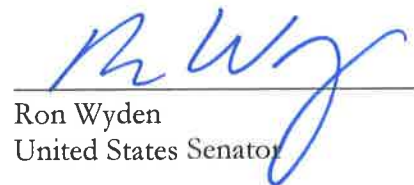
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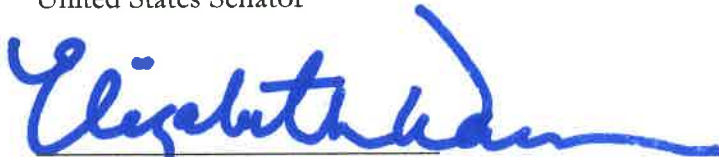
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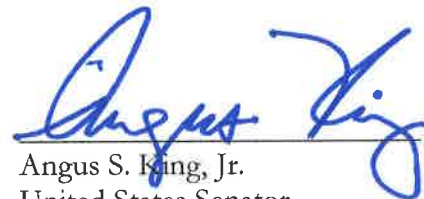
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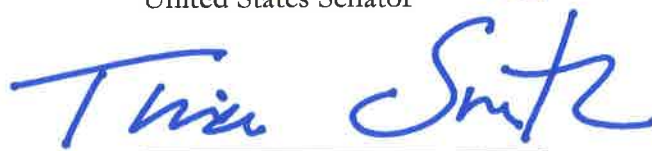
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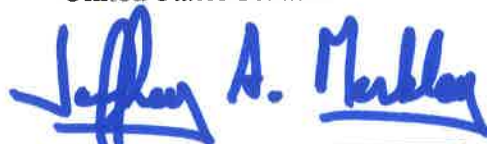
Mazie K. Hirono
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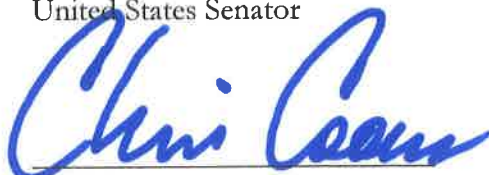
Tina Smith
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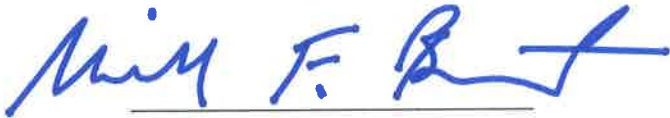
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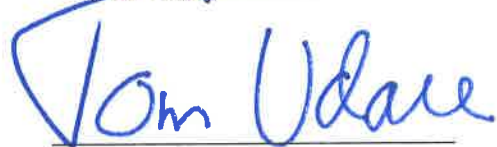
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