

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 26, 2015

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chairman
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and
Human Services and Education
2358-B Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and
Human Services and Education
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Cole and Ranking Member DeLauro:

As you prepare appropriations legislation for the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education for fiscal year 2016, we respectfully request that you provide \$75 million in funding for the Elementary and Secondary School Counseling Program (ESSCP). School violence, bullying and harassment are still far too frequent occurrences, and the need for qualified, trained, and readily available school counselors, school psychologists and school social workers is more pressing than ever.

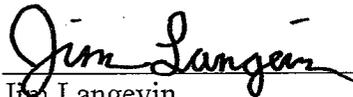
The ESSCP is the only federal program devoted to the creation and expansion of counseling programs in our nation's schools. As part of the No Child Left Behind Act, Congress expanded the ESSCP to include secondary school activities; however, secondary schools cannot benefit unless total funding exceeds the program's statutory funding trigger of \$40 million reserved for elementary schools. As you know, Congress reached the funding trigger for ESSCP in fiscal year 2008 and every year since, which has allowed both middle and high schools to apply for grant funds.

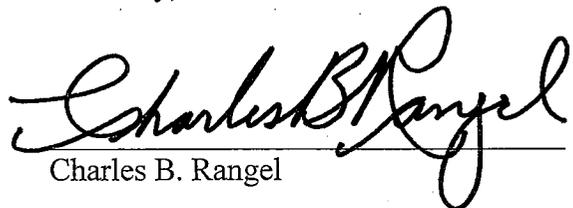
Funding for the ESSCP reached its peak in fiscal year 2010 at \$55 million and has been steadily cut since then. In fiscal year 2014 and again in 2015, this much needed program received \$49.5 million. The FY 2013 competition awarded new funds to 35 school districts in 17 states and continuation funds for 103 additional school districts in 28 states. The need for counseling services at both the elementary and secondary school levels is clear, but the ability of school-employed counseling professionals to assist students in need is hindered by extraordinarily high student-to-professional ratios. Currently, the national average student-to-counselor ratio is a wholly inadequate 471 to 1. Even more alarming, the average student-to-school psychologist ratio is over 1600 to 1, while the student-to-school social worker ratio ranges anywhere from 750 to 1 to 20,000 to 1. The professional organizations governing each of these professions recommends maximum ratios of one school counselor to 250 students, one school social worker to 250 students, and one school psychologist to no more than 700 students, but these professionals are often faced with caseloads of double or even triple that size.

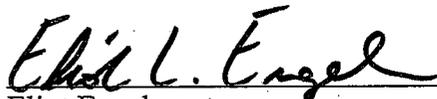
The ESSCP allows school-employed counseling professionals to work together to establish a comprehensive counseling program that helps to address barriers to learning and promote academic success. These professionals guide students through academic, social, emotional and behavioral challenges, as well as the college admission process and career development, preparing them for fulfilling lives as responsible members of their communities. Counseling programs help students make individual choices geared to their unique abilities, interests and goals. This kind of guidance is in demand now more than ever.

We appreciate your support for the ESSCP, and we ask that once again Congress fulfill its commitment to ensuring students' success and well-being by sufficiently funding this program in FY 2016. We look forward to working with you on this important initiative and appreciate your consideration of this request.

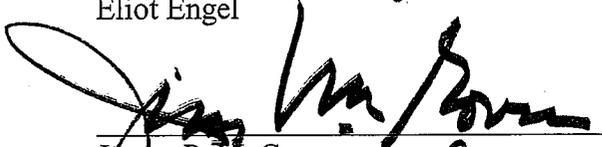
Sincerely,


Jim Langevin

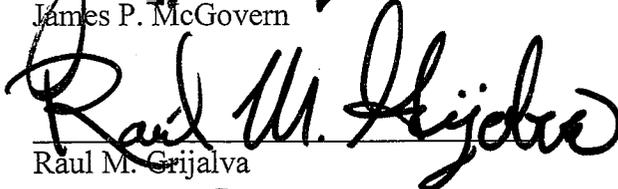

Charles B. Rangel

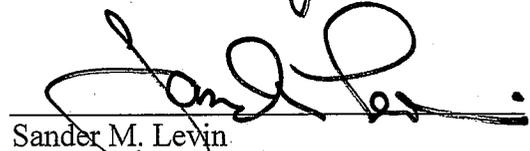

Eliot Engel


Tony Cárdenas

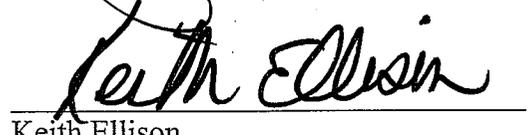

James P. McGovern


Sheila Jackson Lee

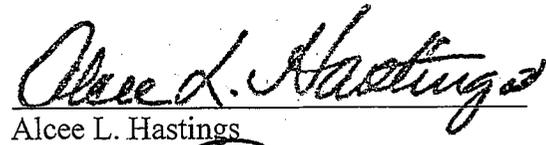

Raul M. Grijalva

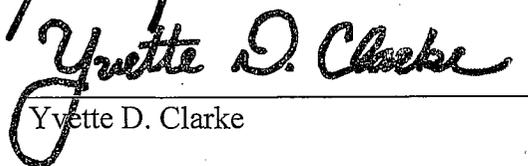

Sander M. Levin


David Scott


Keith Ellison


John Yarmuth


Alcee L. Hastings


Yvette D. Clarke


Mark Pocan

John Garamendi
John Garamendi

Corrine Brown
Corrine Brown

John Conyers
John Conyers

Suzanne Bonamici
Suzanne Bonamici

Mark Takano
Mark Takano

David N. Cicilline
David N. Cicilline

Katherine M. Clark
Katherine Clark

Elizabeth H. Esty
Elizabeth H. Esty

Joaquin Castro
Joaquin Castro

Ben Ray Lujan
Ben Ray Lujan

Gerald Connolly
Gerald Connolly

Dave Loebsack
Dave Loebsack

Alan Grayson
Alan Grayson

Joe Courtney
Joe Courtney

Ann McLane Kuster
Ann McLane Kuster

Andre Carson
Andre Carson

Frederica S. Wilson
Frederica S. Wilson

Jan Schakowsky
Jan Schakowsky

Robert C. "Bobby" Scott
Robert C. "Bobby" Scott

Jim McDermott
Jim McDermott

Gregory W. Meeks
Gregory W. Meeks

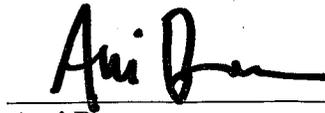
Stacey Plaskett
Stacey Plaskett

Linda T. Sanchez
Linda T. Sanchez

Stephen F. Lynch
Stephen F. Lynch



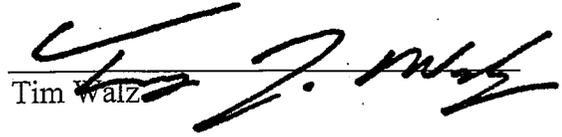
Chaka Fattah



Ami Bera



Steve Cohen



Tim Walz