

August 23, 2017

The Honorable Lamar Alexander, Chairman  
Committee on Health, Education, Labor and  
Pensions  
United States Senate  
428 Senate Dirksen Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray,  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Health, Education, Labor and  
Pensions  
United States Senate  
428 Senate Dirksen Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Alexander and Ranking Member Murray:

On behalf of the undersigned organizations representing the Student Parent Policy Working Group, we respectfully urge you to support funding for the Child Care Access Means Parents in School (CCAMPIS) program in FY 2018. The CCAMPIS program provides vital support for the participation and success of low-income parents in postsecondary education through the provision of campus-based child care. The FY 2018 budget allocation must provide sufficient resources to reverse the effects of recent cuts in vital programs that provide support to students with children, including CCAMPIS, and any budget deal must support the needs of this population by increasing supportive services and funding.

**Affordable, quality child care is crucial to the postsecondary success of the 4.8 million undergraduate students raising dependent children.** Student parents are a growing population that represent over a quarter (26 percent) of all undergraduate students. The number of student parents in the United States climbed by 1.1 million, or 30 percent from 2004 to 2012.

**Student parents are more likely to be low-income and have high amounts of debt**—student parents' average undergraduate debt one year after graduation from a four-year institution amounts to \$26,500—roughly \$2,400 more than students without children. Parents often take out loans to help pay for the high cost of child care—which, at an average of roughly \$6,300 per year for center-based care—can be more expensive than the cost of tuition at a public four-year university.

**Despite the growing need for student parent supports, campus child care centers have been closing across the country.** In 2015, less than half (49 percent) of four-year public colleges provided campus child care, down from 55 percent in 2003-05. The share of community colleges with a campus child care center declined more sharply—from 53 percent in 2003-04, to 44 percent in 2015—a particularly concerning trend due to the large share of student parents enrolled in community colleges.

**Completion rates among parents in college are lower than those of students without children—and more than half (52 percent) leave school without a degree or certificate in six years.** Students with children face substantial time demands, including spending 30 hours or more per week on caregiving, and significant work hours. Nearly two-thirds (61 percent) of student parents work at least 15 hours per week while in college, an amount that reduces college students' likelihood of persisting to graduation, according to peer-reviewed research. The time demands of juggling parenthood, employment, and college make affordable, reliable child care vital to student parents' ability to earn a college credential.

**Students who benefit from CCAMPIS-funded programs often see impressive academic outcomes.** Outcomes data for students who participate in CCAMPIS-funded programs show that child care helps parents graduate. For example, among 75 students enrolled in a four-year program who participated in the

University of Wisconsin-Madison CCAMPIS program from 2005-2011, 85 percent graduated, compared with the overall 6-year bachelor's degree attainment rate for student parents of just 15 percent. CCAMPIS participant graduation rates were identical to the 2010 rate among all UW-Madison undergraduate students (85 percent).

**The Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) is an important resource for college students, yet restrictive state eligibility rules, and insufficient funding for the program overall, mean that students face difficulties in accessing them.** Many states impose rules for receiving CCDBG-funded child care assistance that complicate student parents' ability to qualify, including work requirements while they are in school and limitations on the type of degree they can earn. In addition, student parents in the 20 states with subsidy waiting lists are unlikely to receive child care assistance, and in 2012, only 15 percent of 14.2 million federally eligible children received child care assistance through the CCDBG or related government funding streams.

Preserving and funding the CCAMPIS program will have a positive impact on student parents' ability to afford college and achieve long-term economic security. **The CCAMPIS program is the ONLY federal program dedicated solely to providing child care assistance for students in postsecondary settings.** It enables student parents to persist in and complete postsecondary credentials, which are critical to their families' and communities' economic well-being.

We impress upon you the importance of supporting this underserved population by allocating funds for the Child Care Access Means Parents in School program.

Sincerely,

Student Parent Policy Working Group members:

Access and Success for Student Parents, St. Catherine University  
Bell Policy Center  
Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)  
Colorado Center on Law and Policy  
National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators  
National Women's Law Center  
Partners for Education, Berea College  
Student Parent HELP Center, University of Minnesota Twin Cities  
Young Invincibles