

**Congress of the United States**  
Washington, DC 20510

November 5, 2012

The Honorable Arne Duncan  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20202-1475

Dear Secretary Duncan,

We are writing to request that the Department of Education fully utilize the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) as a tool to notify foster youth of all federal funds which may be available to support their pursuit of higher education. We are concerned that too many of our nation's foster youth are unable to appropriately access critical federal programs that provide assistance to help increase their educational opportunities.


It is unacceptable that many foster youth who are eligible for higher education funds, such as Education and Training Vouchers (ETV) and support through the John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program, are never told about these programs. We believe that every effort should be made to ensure that every foster youth has access to the appropriate information that could help them afford a higher education.

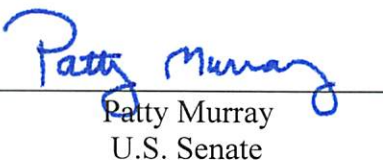
Today, there is already a box that foster youth check on the FAFSA form to indicate that they were in foster care and do not have parental support. We request that changes be made to ensure that any student who checks this box be notified of their potential eligibility for all federal education funds dedicated to assisting foster youth with their higher education expenses, especially ETV and Chafee funds. With only three percent of former foster youth attending college and even fewer graduating, it is vital that we eliminate as many barriers to higher education as possible to give foster youth a stronger chance at a bright future.

We appreciate your leadership in preparing America's students to be career ready.

Thank you for your consideration of our request. We look forward to working with you on this important issue.

Sincerely,

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
John F. Kerry  
U.S. Senate

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Patty Murray  
U.S. Senate



Carl Levin  
U.S. Senate



Barbara A. Mikulski  
U.S. Senate



Benjamin L. Cardin  
U.S. Senate



Al Franken  
U.S. Senate



Mary L. Landrieu  
U.S. Senate



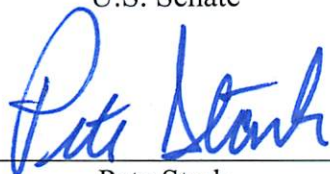
James M. Inhofe  
U.S. Senate



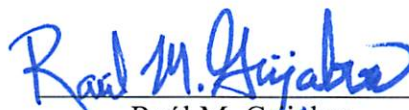
Richard Blumenthal  
U.S. Senate



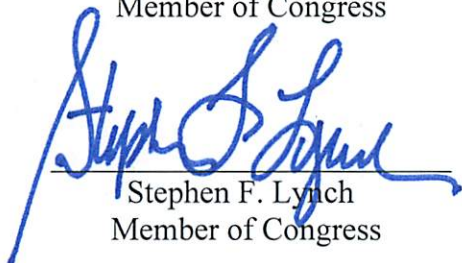
Barbara Boxer  
U.S. Senate



Pete Stark  
Member of Congress



Raúl M. Grijalva  
Member of Congress



Stephen F. Lynch  
Member of Congress



Bob Filner  
Member of Congress



Trent Franks  
Member of Congress



Barbara Lee  
Member of Congress

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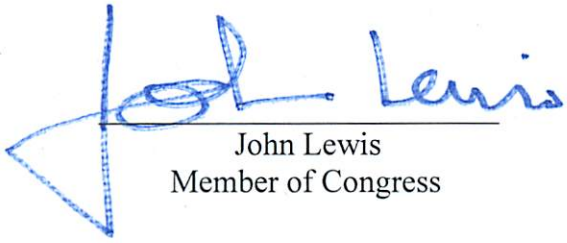
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A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John Lewis". The signature is stylized, with a large, sweeping initial "J" that extends to the left and underlines the name. The word "Lewis" is written in a cursive script to the right of the initial.

John Lewis  
Member of Congress