

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 11, 2011

The Honorable Daniel K. Inouye  
Chairman  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Thad Cochran  
Vice Chairman  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Harkin  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Labor  
Health and Human Services, and Education  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard C. Shelby  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Labor,  
Health and Human Services, and Education  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Inouye, Cochran, Harkin, and Shelby:

We urge you to oppose cuts to the Parental Information Resource Centers program (PIRCs) in FY 2011, and ask that you support the current funding level of \$39.3 million for this important program in the FY 2012 Labor/HHS/Education Appropriations bill. Recent outcome data have shown that the services provided by PIRC's to our nation's parents and families and the schools that serve them are essential to closing the achievement gap and improving educational achievement for all students.

PIRCs are the primary national program dedicated to supporting effective family engagement practices. PIRCS help schools, districts and States across the country with leadership, capacity and technical assistance in partnering with parents. PIRC's enable children and parents to get the most out of school services and federal initiatives such as public school choice and supplemental educational services.

Research demonstrates that PIRCS foster family engagement and improve student achievement in efficient and cost-effective ways: studies show that schools would have to spend \$1,000 per pupil to get the same results provided under the PIRC program. We are concerned that the elimination of PIRC's would jeopardize services presently provided to millions of families, three quarters of which are low-income and half of which are families with children who are English language learners. The loss of these services in rural schools and communities with few other options would be especially devastating.

Furthermore, eliminating funding for the PIRCS will hinder progress made in serving families and parents and raising student achievement. PIRCS across the country provide services to both families and educators, achieving outcomes such as:

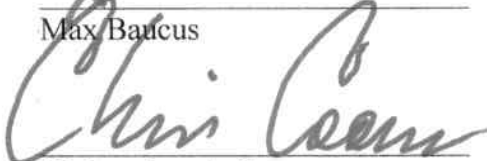
- **Eighty-eight percent (88%) of families** reported that because of the information and services they received from the PIRC, they **were better able to support their children's learning at home**;
- **Eighty-seven percent (87%) of educators** reported that they had **changed their practice of engaging families** because of their work with a PIRC;
- **Ninety-three percent (93%) of educators report having increased knowledge of how to work with families to improve academic achievement**;
- **Families (95%) and educators (97%) report that they have learned how to improve communication between school and home**, because of their work with a PIRC.

Elimination of PIRCS would dismantle the only technical assistance and capacity building system devoted to engaging parents in the education of their children. As you move to fashion funding legislation for the remainder of FY 2011 and begin work on the 2012 Labor/HHS/Education Appropriations legislation, we urge you to maintain funding for the PIRCS at \$39.3 million. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



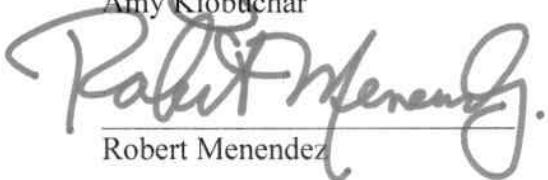
Max Baucus



Christopher A. Coons



Amy Klobuchar



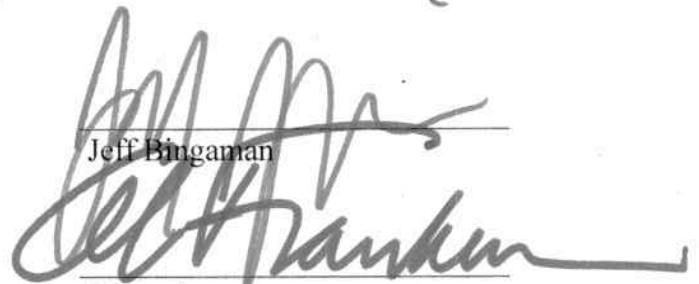
Robert Menendez



Bernie Sanders



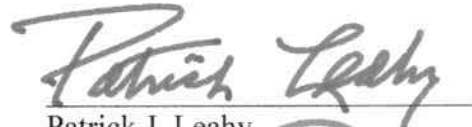
Sheldon Whitehouse




Jeff Bingaman



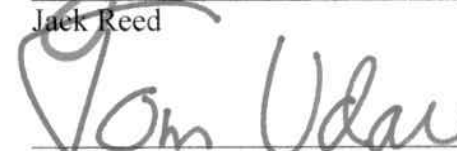
Al Franken



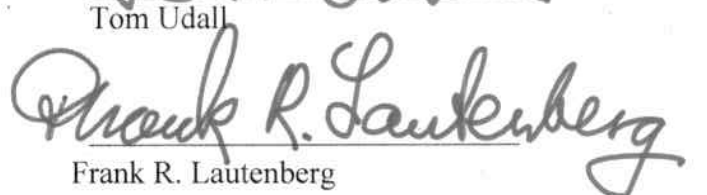
Patrick J. Leahy



Jack Reed



Tom Udall



Frank R. Lautenberg