United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 22, 2017

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Chairman
Appropriations Subcommittee on
Labor, Health and Human Services
and Education
131 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member
Appropriations Subcommittee on
Labor, Health and Human Services
and Education
156 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Blunt and Ranking Member Murray:

As you begin work on the FY 2018 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations bill, we urge you to include $327 million for the Title X family planning program. This will allow Title X health centers to continue their important role in our health care safety net – providing family planning and preventive health services to millions of low-income Americans.

Title X is the only federal program dedicated to providing family planning services for low-income individuals. In 2015, Title X supported nearly 4,000 health centers, which provided basic primary and preventive health care services such as contraception, Pap tests, breast exams, and HIV testing, to more than 4 million women, men and teens. Two-thirds (66%) of Title X patients live at or below the federal poverty level ($11,770 per year for an individual), and four out of ten women who receive care at a Title X-funded health center consider it their sole source of care. Title X serves populations that often face systemic barriers to accessing health services: nearly half (48%) of Title X clients are uninsured, and many identify as racial and ethnic minorities.

According to a 2016 study published in the *American Journal of Public Health*, Title X would require $737 million to be able to serve all low-income women in need of subsidized family planning care. Current Title X funding falls well short of $737 million and, since 2010, the appropriation for Title X has been cut or flat-funded. While we appreciate the effort to maintain the program's funding level in last year's bipartisan bill, especially given that the House proposed to gut Title X and defund it entirely, making cuts to this program is not a viable option for the program's sustainability. Furthermore, legislative efforts to gut the Medicaid program—if passed into law—are expected to exacerbate this budget shortfall.

There has been a sharp rise in efforts in recent years to ban trusted providers from the program, actions which threaten the integrity of the Title X program and individuals' access to the services they need. Additionally, budget cuts over the past seven years have resulted in health centers being forced to scale back hours or limit services, lay off staff, and even shutter their

doors – all under Congress' watch. These harmful cuts have resulted in 1.2 million fewer patients being able to access quality services from the Title X network in just a five-year period. Adequately funding Title X will help restore and expand access to essential family planning services for millions of individuals across the country.

We should not be turning our back on this critical program that so many people rely on for critical health care services. Funding Title X is not only the right thing to do, it is also the fiscally responsible thing to do – every dollar invested in Title X saves more than seven dollars in Medicaid-related costs. Congress should protect families – and that means preserving access to family planning for every American in need.

We ask that you protect this critical program and support the health needs of millions of individuals by providing $327 million in FY 2018 for the Title X program. We thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely

Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator

Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator

Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator

Ron Wyden
United States Senator

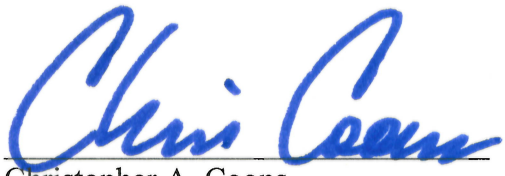
Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator

Bill Nelson
United States Senator

Thomas R. Carper
United States Senator

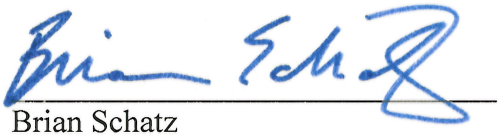
Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator

Al Franken
United States Senator

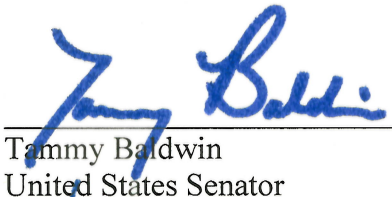


Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator

Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator

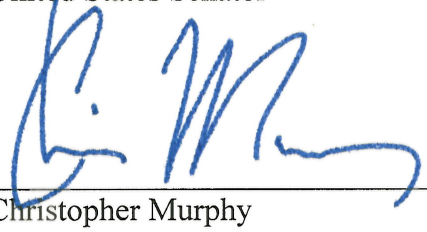


Brian Schatz
United States Senator

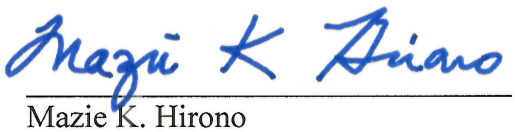


Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator

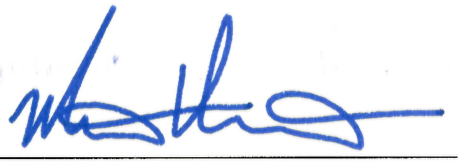
Joe Donnelly
United States Senator



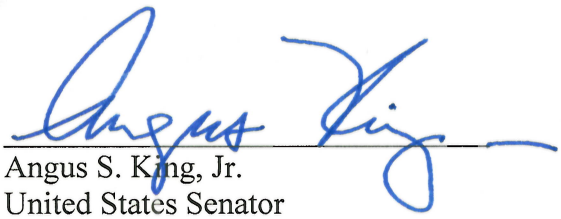
Christopher Murphy
United States Senator



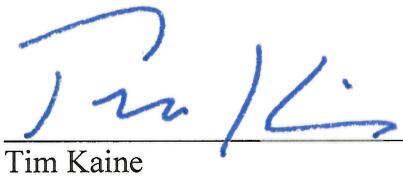
Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator



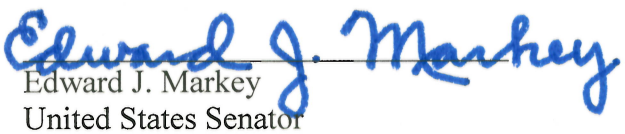
Martin Heinrich
United States Senator



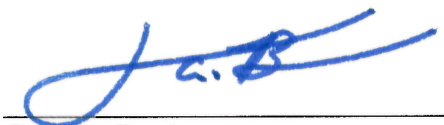
Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator



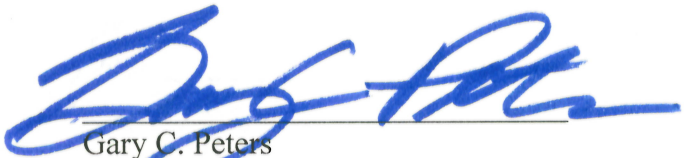
Tim Kaine
United States Senator



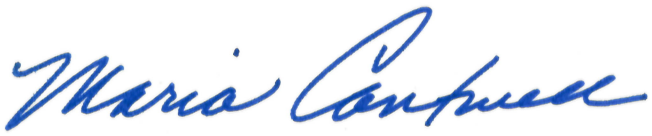
Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



Cory A. Booker
United States Senator



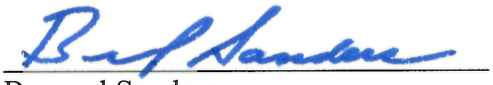
Gary C. Peters
United States Senator



Maria Cantwell
United States Senator

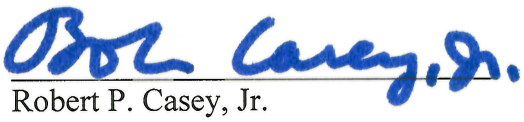
Robert Menendez
United States Senator

Benjamin J. Cardin
United States Senator

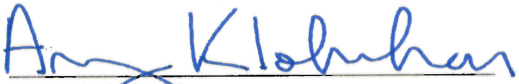


Bernard Sanders
United States Senator

Sherrod Brown
United States Senator

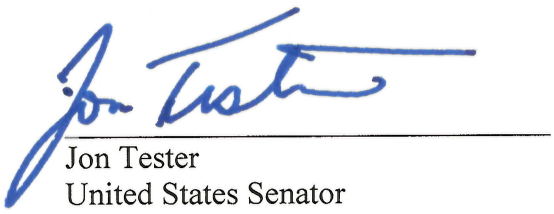


Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator

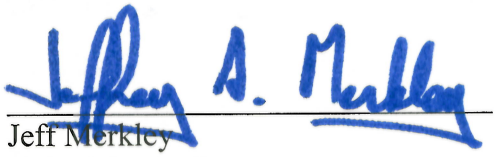
Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator



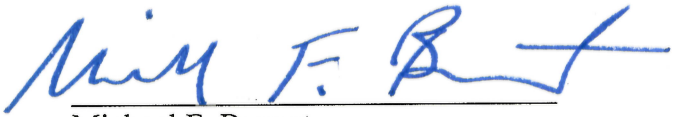
Jon Tester
United States Senator

Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator

Mark R. Warner
United States Senator



Jeff Merkley
United States Senator



Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator

Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator

Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator

Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator

Kamala Harris
United States Senator

Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senator