

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 5, 2017

The Honorable Rodney Frelinghuysen
Chairman
House Appropriations Committee
H-305, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Committee
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

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

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

Dear Chairman Frelinghuysen, Ranking Member Lowey, Chairman Cole, and Ranking Member DeLauro:

As Congress crafts a new supplemental appropriations act to assist U.S. states and territories affected by major disasters, we respectfully urge you to follow recent precedent and authorize supplemental federal funding to assist local educational agencies and institutions of higher education that enroll students displaced by Hurricanes Maria, Irma, and Harvey. Such funding will help elementary, secondary, and post-secondary schools shoulder the unexpected cost of enrolling and properly educating these new students, while continuing to provide a quality education to their existing students.

There is precedent for such emergency funding. In the wake of Hurricanes Katrina, Rita and Wilma, Congress utilized an authorized program to appropriate hundreds of millions of federal dollars to help school districts enrolling displaced students. Funding was distributed to 49 states and the District of Columbia, with Louisiana, Texas, and Mississippi receiving the most funds. We urge you to authorize a similar program to support local educational agencies receiving displaced students and to adequately fund it in the forthcoming supplemental.

In addition, Congress appropriated \$10 million to assist institutions of higher education with unanticipated costs associated with the enrollment of college and university students displaced by the Gulf Coast hurricanes, and 99 institutions in 24 states and the District of Columbia received funds. This program should be reauthorized and adequately funded in the forthcoming supplemental.

We note that, in the wake of Hurricanes Maria and Irma, many families with school-age children are likely to relocate from the U.S. territories of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands to the U.S. mainland. States with large Puerto Rican populations, such as Florida and New York, are likely to receive and enroll a relatively large number of such students in their public schools. Many students relocating from Puerto Rico to the U.S. mainland may lack English-language proficiency, since Spanish is the primary language of instruction in Puerto Rico's public school system. Therefore, these displaced students will require additional resources to enable their English-language acquisition and to facilitate their educational success. The level of federal funding appropriated, and the methodology by which such funding is distributed, should fully account for a displaced student's status as an English learner.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Stephanie Murphy
Member of Congress



Carlos Curbelo
Member of Congress



Darren Soto
Member of Congress



Ileana Ros-Lehtinen
Member of Congress



Frederica S. Wilson
Member of Congress



Brian K. Fitzpatrick
Member of Congress



Dwight Evans
Member of Congress



Leonard Lance
Member of Congress



Nydia M. Velázquez
Member of Congress



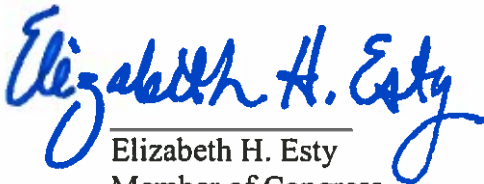
Eloy Smucker
Member of Congress



Joe Courtney
Member of Congress



Brian Higgins
Member of Congress



Elizabeth H. Esty
Member of Congress



Grace Meng
Member of Congress



Adriano Espaillat
Member of Congress



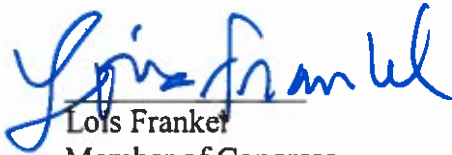
Alcee L. Hastings
Member of Congress



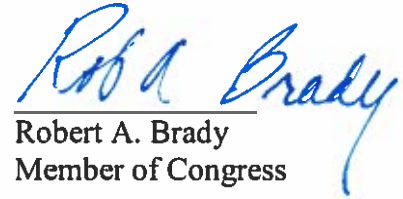
Al Lawson
Member of Congress



Albio Sires
Member of Congress



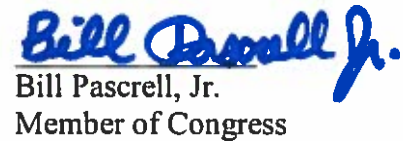
Lois Frankel
Member of Congress



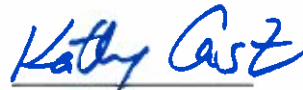
Robert A. Brady
Member of Congress



Richard E. Neal
Member of Congress



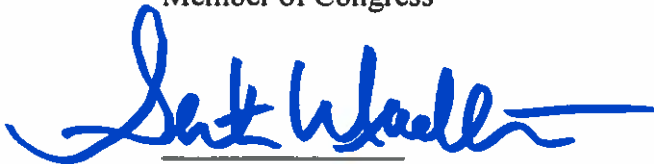
Bill Pascrell, Jr.
Member of Congress



Kathy Castor
Member of Congress



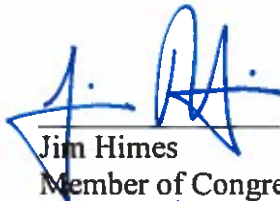
Val Butler Demings
Member of Congress



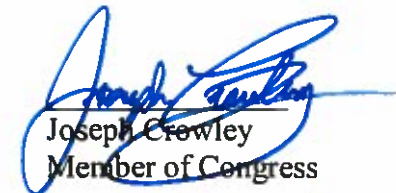
Seth Moulton
Member of Congress



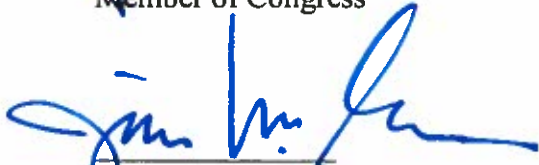
John B. Larson
Member of Congress



Jim Himes
Member of Congress



Joseph Crowley
Member of Congress



James P. McGovern
Member of Congress



Frank Pallone, Jr.
Member of Congress

**cc: The Honorable Mick Mulvaney, Director, Office of Management and Budget
The Honorable Betsy DeVos, Secretary, U.S. Department of Education**