

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

November 8, 2011

Honorable Denny Rehberg
Chairman
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and
Human Services and Education
House Appropriations Committee
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and
Human Services and Education
House Appropriations Committee
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Rehberg and Ranking Member DeLauro:

As you negotiate funding levels for the Fiscal Year 2012 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies (LHHS) Appropriations bill, we urge you to include \$183 million for the vital literacy program, Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy, at the Department of Education – the level approved by the Senate Appropriations Committee.

Research clearly demonstrates that a high-quality, literacy-rich environment beginning in early childhood is one of the most important factors in determining school readiness and success, high school graduation, college access and success, and workforce readiness. All citizens need advanced literacy skills in order to think critically as well as to access new information and technologies. Graduating globally competent citizens depends on students using their reading and writing skills to develop important abilities in such areas as math, science, and technology.

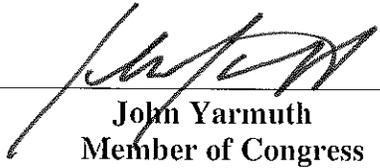
Currently, 30 percent of American students fail to graduate high school and reading scores have remained flat for 30 years. As we seek to ensure our nation's workforce remains competitive in a global market, a strong federal commitment to literacy is desperately needed. Striving Readers is the only targeted federal literacy funding for birth through grade 12 teacher professional development and research-based interventions for students who cannot read and write well enough to progress in school through graduation.

In September, six states – Georgia, Louisiana, Montana, Nevada, Pennsylvania, and Texas – were awarded Striving Readers implementation grants, after 48 states received formula funding in 2010 to create a state literacy team. Without renewed funding in FY 2012, the Department of Education may not be able to continue funding the existing grantees, much less provide resources to additional states.

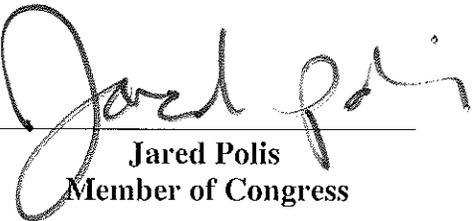
That is why we urge you to fund this innovative early childhood, elementary, and secondary education initiative at \$183 million – the level provided in the Senate's LHHS Appropriations bill – to accelerate reading and writing achievement so that more students graduate with the skills needed for success in higher education, work, and civic life.

Thank you for your consideration of this request, and we hope we can count on your support.

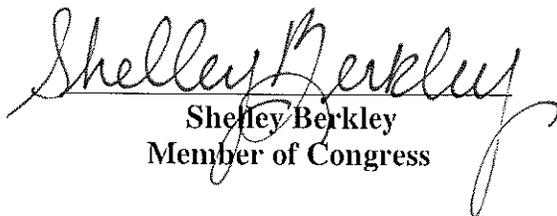
Sincerely,



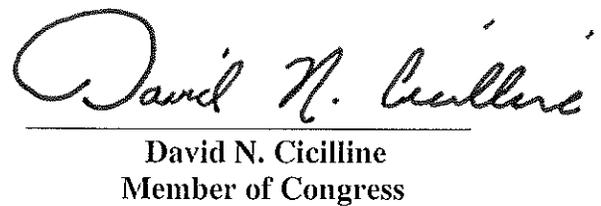
John Yarmuth
Member of Congress



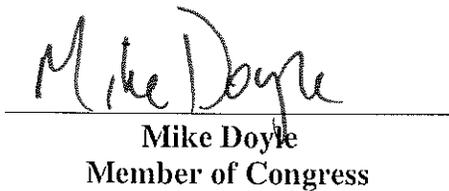
Jared Polis
Member of Congress



Shelley Berkley
Member of Congress



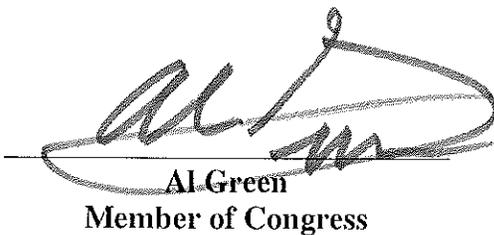
David N. Cicilline
Member of Congress



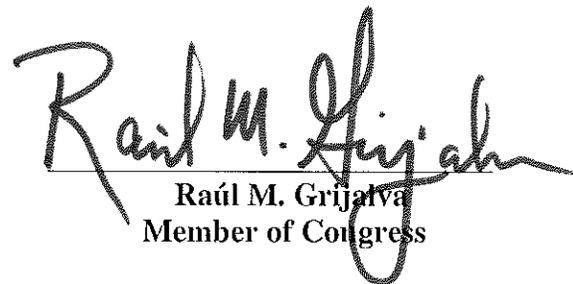
Mike Doyle
Member of Congress



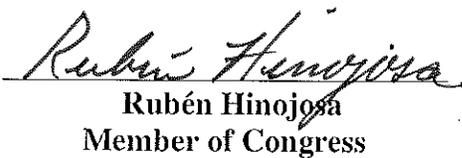
Keith Ellison
Member of Congress



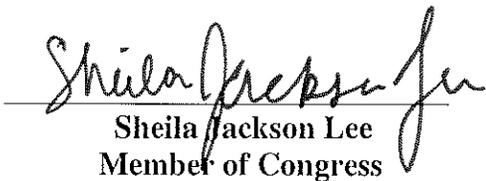
Al Green
Member of Congress



Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress



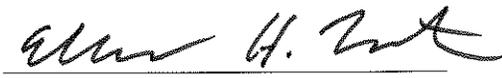
Rubén Hinojosa
Member of Congress

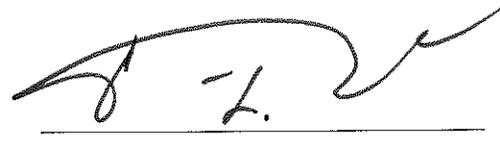


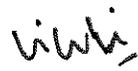
Sheila Jackson Lee
Member of Congress


Hank Johnson
Member of Congress


David Loebsack
Member of Congress


Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress


Cedric L. Richmond
Member of Congress


Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan
Member of Congress