

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

March 18, 2026

The Honorable Robert Aderholt
Chairman
House Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education, and Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20515

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

Dear Chairman Aderholt and Ranking Member Rosa DeLauro:

As you begin to craft the Fiscal Year 2027 (FY27) Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education and Related Agencies Appropriations bill, we respectfully request that you increase funding for the Adult Education State Grant program to \$810 million. Further, we ask you to specify this funding in the bill text.

The need for adult education has grown more acute in recent years as the skills gap has widened. Findings by the Program for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) indicate that low performance in literacy increased from 19 to 28 percent and numeracy from 29 to 34 percent of U.S. adults between 2017 and 2023.¹ Combined with the fact that 50 percent of the workforce will have to reskill by 2030,² it is no surprise that 75 percent of employers are already finding it difficult to fill vacancies for in-demand jobs.³ At current funding levels, adult education programs, many of which have waiting lists, can only reach approximately 1.1 million people.⁴ Without the opportunities provided through adult education programs, many adults will be sidelined from the economy as they struggle to find jobs that provide family-sustaining wages, and employers will continue to face workforce shortages.

To address this critical need, we urge you to work toward doubling funding for adult education over the next five years, with a first installment of at least \$810 million for the Adult Education State Grant program in FY27.

Adult education provides literacy, numeracy, digital and information literacy, English language skills, work readiness, soft skills, high school equivalency, and numerous wraparound services. These programs help some of our most vulnerable communities in our country including immigrants, formerly incarcerated persons, and persons without high school diplomas access educational resources, integrate into their community, and participate in our economy. If properly resourced and supported, adult education programs can be the difference between earning a family-sustaining wage and struggling to make ends meet. It should be a top priority to ensure a

¹ Highlights of the 2023 U.S. PIAAC Results. National Center for Education Statistics. Retrieved https://nces.ed.gov/surveys/piaac/2023/national_results.asp

² The Rising Storm Building a Future-Ready Workforce to Withstand the Looming Labor Shortage. Lightcast. Retrieved https://www.datocms-assets.com/62658/1761154208-the_rising_storm_lightcast_oct_25.pdf

³ The Workforce Risk Outlook Report. Lightcast. Retrieved https://www.datocms-assets.com/62658/1747082272-workforce_risk_outlook.pdf

⁴ Department of Education. Career, Technical, and Adult Education Fiscal Year 2025 Budget Request. Retrieved <https://www2.ed.gov/about/overview/budget/budget25/justifications/o-ctae.pdf>

healthy resilient economy that lifts up all communities and provides employers with a pool of skilled workers.

According to a recent study, the cost of illiteracy in the U.S. is approximately \$300.8 billion per year, stemming from lost earnings, lower productivity, less innovation, increased need for government assistance, and more.⁵ Now is the time to build the capacity of adult education programs, and in doing so, strengthen our workforce development system and our overall economy.

We urge you to increase funding for the Adult Education State Grant program to \$810 million for FY27 and specifically delineate this funding in the bill text.

Thank you for your consideration of this important request.

Sincerely,



Dan Goldman
Member of Congress



Adelita S. Grijalva
Member of Congress



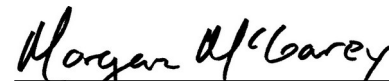
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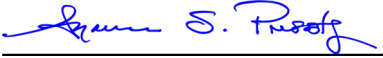


Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress

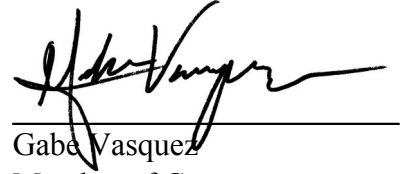


Lucy McBath
Member of Congress

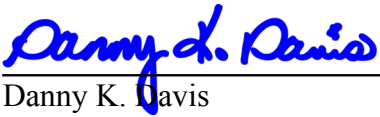
⁵ The Economic & Social Cost of Illiteracy: A Snapshot of Illiteracy in a Global Context. World Literacy Foundation. Retrieved <https://worldliteracyfoundation.org/wlf2019/1REPORTS-WLF/The-Economic-Social-Cost-of-Illiteracy-2023.pdf>



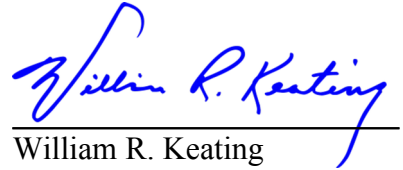
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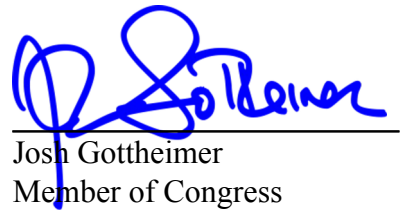
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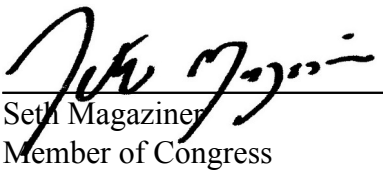
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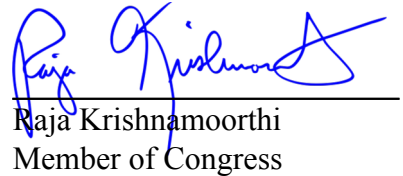
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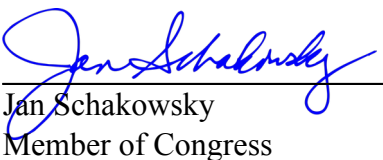
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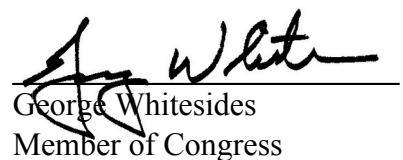
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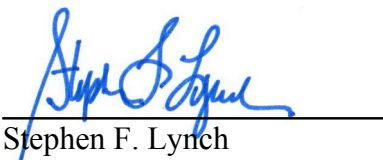
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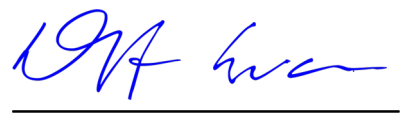
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Dwight Evans
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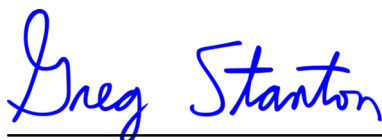
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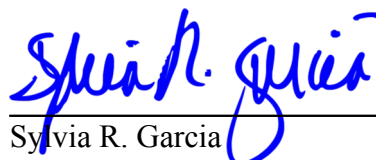
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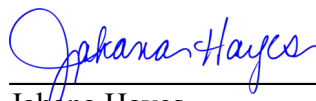
Ami Bera
Member of Congress



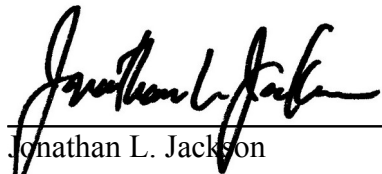
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Jesús G. "Chuy" García
Member of Congress



Jahana Hayes
Member of Congress



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