

Senator Tammy Baldwin  
Chair, LHHS Subcommittee  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Representative Robert Aderholt  
Chair, LHHS Subcommittee  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Senator Shelley Moore Capito  
Ranking Member, LHHS Subcommittee  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Representative Rosa DeLauro  
Ranking Member, LHHS Subcommittee  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chair Baldwin, Ranking Member Capito, Chair Aderholt, and Ranking Member DeLauro:

We, the undersigned 163 organizations, are writing to urge you to include \$2 billion in the Fiscal Year 2024 (FY24) budget for Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)—the federal formula grant program intended to support English learners (ELs) in every state and territory. Grants are based on each state’s share of EL students and recent immigrant student population. ELs make up 10% of K-12 public school students in the U.S. and are one of the fastest-growing student populations. The number of ELs in the U.S. grew 35% between the fall 2000 and fall of 2019.<sup>i</sup> As of 2019, there were [5.1 million English learners](#) enrolled in public schools.<sup>ii</sup> While increasing numbers of late-entrant students—students with interrupted education—and refugee children are enrolling in schools, it is important to note that most EL students are U.S.-born citizens.

Research shows that ELs perform better when they have qualified teachers and high-quality learning materials (including digital curriculum), and their schools have adequate financial resources. Evidence indicates that these factors contribute to narrowing opportunity gaps on indicators such as graduation rates, college attendance rates, and enrollment in advanced placement classes. Despite the evidence, however, these resources are drastically lacking for English learners.

While federal funding to support the education of ELs was first established in 1968 through the Bilingual Education Act, which later evolved into Title III in the 2002 reauthorization of the ESEA, funding has failed to keep up with the needs of the nation’s EL population. Title III funding has increased marginally since the inception of the program in the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2002, increasing 34% between FY2002 and FY2023 (from \$664 million to \$890 million). The FY23 level of \$890 million leaves schools with approximately \$173 per EL in federal funding – an inadequate amount to support their needs. Even more concerning is that when adjusting for inflation, Title III funding has decreased by 9% since 2008.<sup>iii</sup> In FY08, Title III was funded at \$700 million, which is roughly \$978 million in 2023 when adjusted for inflation.

Years of underinvestment in Title III has had a disproportionate impact on students of color, low-income students, immigrant families, and students with disabilities. Not only has the EL population grown, but it is increasingly more linguistically and culturally diverse as suburban, exurban, and rural districts have seen dramatic increases in their EL populations. While the majority of EL students are Latino (77%), 10% are Asian and 7% are White.<sup>iv</sup> States list over 50 commonly spoken languages, including Chinese, Arabic, and Vietnamese.<sup>v</sup> Approximately 16% ([792,039](#)) are also identified as students with disabilities.<sup>vi</sup>

The lack of adequate funding to support ELs has contributed to the persistence of wide opportunity gaps. According to the [2022 National Assessment of Education Progress](#), 10% of ELs in 4th grade scored at or above proficient in reading compared to the national average of 32%, and only 4% of ELs in 8th grade scored at or above proficient in math compared to the national average of 26%. In addition, the Office of English Language Acquisition reports that while 85% of students nationwide graduated from high school on time in 2018, the rate was only [68% for ELs](#).

In order to support ELs to reach their full potential and maximize their contributions to the U.S. economy, ELs need additional targeted resources, ranging from tutoring, summer and afterschool programs, multilingual language development services to social and emotional support for challenges exacerbated by the pandemic. Additionally, the nation's growing EL student population needs a robust teacher workforce equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to teach them. To improve academic progress and meet the social and emotional needs of EL students, we make the following recommendations for Congress:

**Appropriate \$2 billion for Title III in the FY24 federal budget.** Funding Title III at this level would increase federal support for ELs to \$400/per pupil, as well as provide resources in other key areas, including:

- \$100 million to create a discretionary grant program for the development and adoption of native language assessments to leverage the full repertoire of linguistic, cultural, and cognitive resources that ELs bring to school and to better inform equitable and higher-level instruction.
- Support for more teachers to attain their English Language Development or Bilingual certification and professional development for teachers of ELs through the National Professional Development program within Title III.
- Culturally and linguistically responsive engagement with EL families.
- Community and family initiatives to support summer and after-school academic and social programs for English learners.
- Sustainable innovative programs that support bilingual and dual language education, and leverage the unique linguistic, cultural, and cognitive capital of ELs to promote higher levels of academic and socio-emotional outcomes.

The undersigned organizations respectfully urge you to consider the recommendations outlined above and support \$2 billion for Title III in FY24. We are committed to supporting English learners—our nation's future—to ensure that they have access to a high-quality education. Our prosperity as a nation beyond the pandemic depends on their success. Should you have any questions, please contact Amalia Chamorro, Director of the Education Policy Project, UnidosUS at [achamorro@unidosus.org](mailto:achamorro@unidosus.org).

### **National Organizations**

AACTE (American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education)

ACTFL

All4Ed

American Federation of Teachers

Arab American Institute

Asian Americans Advancing Justice | AAJC

ASPIRA Association

Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents (ALAS)

Center for Applied Linguistics  
Children's Defense Fund  
Council of Administrators of Special Education  
EDGE Consulting Partners  
Education Leaders of Color (EdLoC)  
Education Reform Now  
Empowering Latino Futures  
English Learners Success Forum  
GLSEN  
Green Dot Public Schools National  
IDRA  
ImmSchools  
Institute for Educational Leadership  
Joint National Committee for Languages  
KIPP Public Schools  
Latinos for Education  
MomsRising  
MALDEF  
National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity  
National Alliance for Public Charter Schools  
National Association for Bilingual Education  
National Association of English Learner Program Administrators (NAELPA)  
National Association of School Psychologists  
National Center for Families Learning  
National Center for Learning Disabilities  
National Coalition for Latinxs with Disabilities (CNLD)  
National Council for Languages and International Studies  
National Disability Rights Network (NDRN)  
National Education Association  
National Migrant and Seasonal Head Start Association  
National Migrant Seasonal Head Start Association  
National Parents Union  
National PTA  
National Urban League  
New Leaders  
Our Turn  
Teach Plus  
TESOL International Association  
The Education Trust  
TNTP  
UnidosUS  
United Migrant Opportunity Services/UMOS Inc

### **Mid-Atlantic Region**

CASA

## **Southwest Region**

Cesar Chavez Foundation

### **Arizona**

Aliento Education Fund  
ALL In Education  
Arizona Center for Empowerment  
Arizona School Boards Association  
Comite de Bien Estar  
Corazón Arizona  
Friendly House Inc.  
Promise Arizona

### **California**

Alliance for a Better Community  
Building Healthy Communities- Monterey County  
Building Skills Partnership  
California Association for Bilingual Education (CABE)  
Californians for Justice  
Californians Together  
Canal Alliance  
Center for Equity for English Learners  
Early Edge California  
Eastmont Community Center  
El Sol Academy  
Innecare  
La Maestra Family Clinic, Inc.  
La Raza Community resource Center  
Para Los Ninos  
Parent Institute for Quality Education  
PUENTE Learning Center  
Sobrato Early Academic Language  
The Wall Las Memorias

### **Colorado**

Colorado Latino Leadership, Advocacy & Research Organization  
Latino Community Foundation of Colorado  
Mi Casa Resource Center

### **Delaware**

Latin American Community Center

## **District of Columbia**

Central American Resource Center

## **Florida**

Enterprising Latinas Inc.  
Florida Policy Institute  
Haitian Neighborhood Center Sant La  
HISPANIC SERVICES COUNCIL INC  
Hispanic Unity of Florida  
Housing and Education Alliance, Inc.  
Latino Leadership, Inc.  
LULAC Florida  
Mexican American Council  
Rural Neighborhoods

## **Georgia**

Latin American Association  
Ser Familia, Inc.

## **Hawai'i**

Hawai'i Coalition for Immigrant Rights  
Hawai'i Scholars for Education and Social Justice  
Hawai'i TESOL  
Hawaii Children's Action Network Speaks!  
HI Coalition for Immigrant Rights  
Immigrant Services Division - County of Maui  
University of Hawai'i - Leeward CC

## **Illinois**

Acero Schools  
Brighton Park Neighborhood Council  
Centro Romero  
Illinois Migrant Council  
Instituto del Progreso Latino  
LULAC-IL  
The Resurrection Project

## **Kansas**

El Centro, Inc.

**Massachusetts**

East Boston Community Council  
Greater Lawrence Community Action Council

**Michigan**

Hispanic Center of Western Michigan  
Southwest Economic Solutions

**Minnesota**

El Colegio Charter School

**Nebraska**

Nebraska Commission on Latino-Americans

**Nevada**

CSNV

**New Mexico**

New Mexico Public Education Department

**New York**

Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation, Inc.  
Dominico-American Society of Queens  
Ibero-American Action League  
National Network for Arab American Communities  
Next100  
The Committee for Hispanic Children and Families  
New York Immigration Coalition

**North Carolina**

ASPIRA of the Mid-Atlantic  
El Centro Hispano

**Ohio**

El Centro de Servicios Sociales, Inc.  
Esperanza, Inc.  
Northeast Ohio Hispanic Center for Economic Development  
Ohio Hispanic Coalition

## **Oregon**

El Programa Hispano Catolico

## **Pennsylvania**

Centro Hispano Daniel Torres Inc.  
Congreso de Latinos Unidos  
Education Law Center Pennsylvania  
LCH Health and Community Services  
SPANISH AMERICAN CIVIC ASSOCIATION

## **Puerto Rico**

Corporación Desarrollo Económico, Vivienda y Salud (CODEVYS)  
Friends of Puerto Rico  
Instituto Pre-Vocacional e Industrial de PR Inc.  
One Stop Career Center of PR Inc

## **South Carolina**

ASPIRA of the Mid-Atlantic  
Hispanic Alliance

## **Tennessee**

Centro Hispano de East Tennessee  
Conexion Americas

## **Texas**

THE CARE PROGRAM, Inc.  
AVANCE, Inc.  
Avenida Guadalupe Association  
Breakthrough Central Texas  
Every Texan  
La Fe Policy Research and Education Center  
Latino Texas Policy Center  
MULTICULTURAL FAMILY CENTER  
Northside American Federation of Teachers  
Project Vida  
Proyecto Vida Digna  
Texas Association for Bilingual Education  
Texas State Teachers Association  
The Education Trust in Texas

## Virginia

Edu-Futuro

## Washington

Sea Mar Community Health Centers

## Wisconsin

La Causa Charter School

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<sup>i</sup> National Center for Education Statistics, Table 204.20, [English learner \(EL\) students enrolled in public elementary and secondary schools, by state: Selected years, fall 2000 through fall 2019](#) (Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics, 2021).

<sup>ii</sup> National Center for Education Statistics, Table 204.20, [English learner \(EL\) students enrolled in public elementary and secondary schools, by state: Selected years, fall 2000 through fall 2019](#) (Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics, 2021).

<sup>iii</sup> UnidosUS calculation based on Bureau of Labor Statistics CPI inflation calculator and U.S. Department of Education and NCES data.

<sup>iv</sup> National Center for Education Statistics, English Learners in Public Schools (Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics, 2021).

<sup>v</sup> National Center for Education Statistics, English Learners in Public Schools (Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics, 2021).

<sup>vi</sup> U.S. Department of Education, Office of English Language Acquisition, English Learners: English Learners with Disabilities (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, 2021).