

March 22, 2023

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

The Honorable Rosa L. DeLauro
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor,
Health and Human Services, Education, and
Related Agencies
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chair Aderholt and Ranking Member DeLauro:

We, the undersigned 26 organizations, representing education associations, policy advocates, researchers, and stakeholders, write to express our support for maintaining the U.S. Secretary of Education's authority to set aside 0.5 percent of funding from certain Higher Education Act (HEA) programs within the U.S. Department of Education (ED) to support rigorous evaluations and the collection and analysis of outcome data for HEA programs. This authority was included in the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2022 and 2023 and we urge Congress to continue to maintain this important provision.

This set-aside authority increases ED's capacity to build evidence of effective practices to support the continuous improvement of HEA programs and ultimately improve students' postsecondary success. Historically, there have been insufficient financial resources and a lack of staff capacity to support rigorous evaluations of interventions funded by the HEA. In fact, just 197 higher education study reviews meet the What Works Clearinghouse standards, compared with 1,082 focused on K-12 education. Maintaining this set-aside authority in FY2024 will enable ED to advance long-term equity-focused, student-centered, and evidence-based policy and practice change by strengthening the evidence base on what interventions work, for whom, and under what circumstances in higher education. Additionally, maintaining the evaluation set-aside authority for the Secretary of Education supports parity across agencies, many of which have the authority to set-aside funds for the purpose of research and evaluation.

Thank you for considering this request to maintain the Secretary of Education's authority to set aside funds to support rigorous research and evaluations. If you have any questions, please contact Jessica Vivar, Government Affairs Associate (jvivar@ihep.org).

Sincerely,

Alabama Possible
America Forward
American Association of State Colleges and Universities
American Institutes for Research
Arnold Ventures
Association for Career and Technical Education
Braven

Campaign for College Opportunity
Complete College America
Data Foundation
Data Quality Campaign
Education Reform Now
Generation Hope
Higher Learning Advocates
Institute for Higher Education Policy (IHEP)
Knowledge Alliance
National College Attainment Network
New America Higher Education Program
Results for America
RTI International
The Charles A Dana Center at The University of Texas at Austin
The Education Trust
The Institute for College Access & Success
Third Way
UNCF
Westat