



Stop Congress From Defunding the LEARN Act

March 22, 2017

ILA Members:

Now is the time for your voice to be heard!

President Trump's federal budget proposal released last week calls for deep cuts in education funding, including the elimination of funds for the Literacy Education for All, Results for the Nation (LEARN) Act that is part of the bipartisan Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2016.

LEARN 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. Funding of these innovative initiatives is critical, as it provides millions of students in the United States with access to quality reading and writing instruction.

Last year, the Board of Directors of the International Literacy Association advocated for passage of ESSA and LEARN because these measures provide crucial support for effective literacy instruction to students in the nation's least economically resourced school districts.

Representatives John Yarmuth (D-KY) and Jared Polis (D-CO) have prepared a Dear Colleague letter that will soon be sent to the Chair and Ranking member of the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee in support of \$190 million for the LEARN program for fiscal year (FY) 2018.

Please call your representative as soon as possible and ask him or her to support funding for LEARN by signing on to this letter. Your representative can add his or her name to the letter by e-mailing Erica DiCio in Congressman Yarmuth's office at Erica.DiCio@mail.house.gov or dialing 5-5401. **The deadline to sign the letter is March 30, 2017.**

Review the full draft of the Dear Colleague letter below.

To find your representative, click [here](#). If he or she has not seen the draft letter, forward the link to this PDF.

Thank you for taking action on behalf of all the nation's students.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Daniel Mangan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

Daniel Mangan, Director of Public Affairs

Support Comprehensive Literacy Funding

Text of the Yarmuth/Polis Dear Colleague Letter

Honorable Tom Cole
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 Cole and Ranking Member DeLauro:

We write to thank you for your past support of the Literacy for All, Results for the Nation (LEARN) program, authorized under Title IIB of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), which builds on the success of the Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy program. We ask that LEARN be funded at \$190 million in the FY 2018 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill.

The newly authorized LEARN program provides competitive grants to State Educational Agencies to help local educational agencies develop comprehensive literacy instruction plans to ensure high-quality instruction and evidence-based intervention strategies for all students from birth to grade 12. Local school districts will use federal funds to support high-quality professional development for teachers, teacher leaders, principals, and specialized instructional support personnel to improve literacy instruction for struggling readers and writers, including English language learners and students with disabilities. Currently, this is the only funding stream that supports statewide, research-based literacy instruction and interventions supporting low-performing students from early childhood through high school.

The skills our students need today are much more complex than they were 50 years ago. Creating a globally competent workforce depends on students using their reading and writing skills to develop important abilities in such areas as math, science, technology, and manufacturing. In order to fill these jobs, students will need to have the literacy skills that will allow them to use manuals and read programming, and they will need to have the writing ability to communicate what is working, how much it costs, and how to improve processes. Yet, currently, about 61 percent of employers request or require high school graduates to get additional education or training to make up for gaps in their ability to read and write effectively. Private industry spends an estimated \$3.1 billion annually to bolster the literacy skills of entry-level workers.

As we seek to ensure our nation's workforce remains competitive in a global market, a strong federal commitment to literacy is imperative. That is why we urge you to provide \$190 million in the FY 2018 Labor HHS bill for this innovative early childhood, elementary, and secondary education initiative to support 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. We hope we can count on your support.

Sincerely,

John Yarmuth
Member of Congress

Jared Polis
Member of Congress