

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 26, 2015

The Honorable Roy Blunt  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on L-HHS-ED  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate

The Honorable Patty Murray  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on L-HHS-ED  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate

Dear Chairman Blunt and Ranking Member Murray:

We urge you to recognize the importance of the Federal Impact Aid Program as you set the Appropriation Subcommittee's funding priorities for Fiscal Year (FY) 2016. We appreciate the program was made a priority in the FY 2014 omnibus appropriations legislation and received funding to nearly restore the program to its pre-sequestration funding levels. We fully recognize the fiscal restraint that will govern the Subcommittee's actions this year, but we request strong and continued funding for all line items of the Impact Aid Program to ensure all federally connected school districts can provide a quality education.

Impact Aid was created in 1950 because Congress recognized the Federal Government needed to accept responsibility – in areas impacted by a federal presence – by partnering with local taxpayers to help meet the local responsibility of financing public education. Impact Aid provides a payment in lieu of taxes to local school districts for lost revenue that is a result of tax-exempt federal property and actions that have increased expenditures due to the enrollment of federally connected children. The program provides direct, flexible funding to over 1,300 school districts. Impact Aid funds a range of programs, including programs to retain highly qualified teachers, adequate technology, facilities renovation, and maintenance of transportation fleets. For many districts, this funding represents the very lifeblood that allows their school systems to operate.

For districts enrolling military children, the ability to address both the academic and emotional needs of these students must be maintained. Education is a quality-of-life issue for military families, and it is our firm belief that as military personnel defend our country we must not forget or ignore the children they leave behind.

The needs of districts enrolling Indian Land children – of which over 93 percent are Native American – also must not be overlooked. These districts strive to find creative ways to integrate curriculum and best practices to prepare students for success. Often, these school districts are located in rural areas with few taxpayers and where administrators double as bus drivers, teachers, and coaches. These dollars provide a foundational education program for all students; many schools would close their doors without the support of Impact Aid.

The Administration's FY 2016 budget proposal recommends the elimination of funding for Section 8002 (Federal Properties) for the fourth year in a row, despite continued support from Congress for the program. Federal Properties school districts depend on Impact Aid due to a limited local tax base

caused by the presence of certain federal land in their districts, including national parks and grasslands, national laboratories, Army Corps of Engineering projects, and property that encompasses the military academies. In some of these communities, the Federal Government is the largest landowner, which significantly diminishes a school district's revenue base.

We realize the Subcommittee will be working under significant budget constraints, but we urge you to support continued funding for the entire Impact Aid Program. While the restoration of funding in FY 2014 was welcome relief for these school districts, the potential of long-term funding stagnation is of serious concern given the changing needs of the program and the students these districts serve. Impact Aid is not only the Federal Government's obligation, but also a tax relief program for local communities. Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of our request.

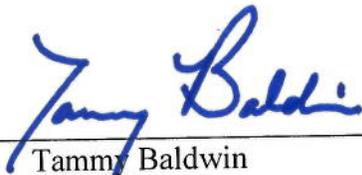
Sincerely,



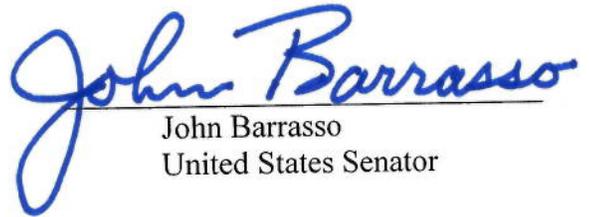
James M. Inhofe  
United States Senator



Charles E. Schumer  
United States Senator



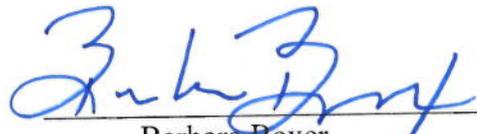
Tammy Baldwin  
United States Senator



John Barrasso  
United States Senator



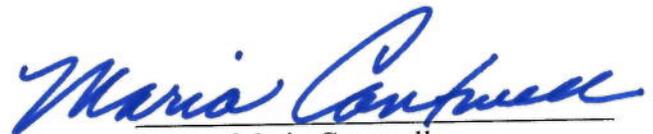
Michael F. Bennet  
United States Senator



Barbara Boxer  
United States Senator



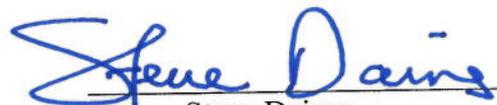
Sherrod Brown  
United States Senator



Maria Cantwell  
United States Senator



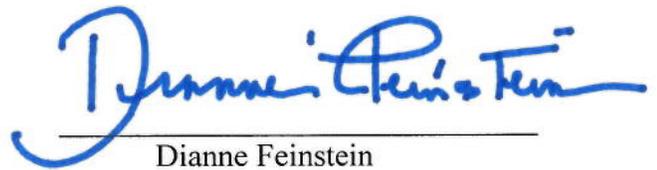
Mike Crapo  
United States Senator



Steve Daines  
United States Senator



Richard J. Durbin  
United States Senator



Dianne Feinstein  
United States Senator



Deb Fischer  
United States Senator



Al Franken  
United States Senator



Kirsten Gillibrand  
United States Senator



Martin Heinrich  
United States Senator



Heidi Heitkamp  
United States Senator



Mazie K. Hirono  
United States Senator



John Hoeven  
United States Senator



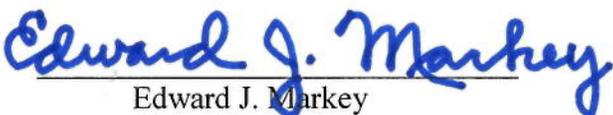
Johnny Isakson  
United States Senator



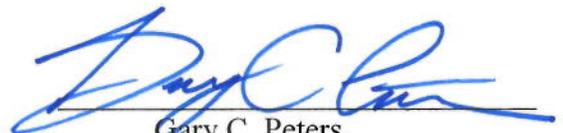
Tim Kaine  
United States Senator



Amy Klobuchar  
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey  
United States Senator



Gary C. Peters  
United States Senator



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Jack Reed  
United States Senator



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Jim Risch  
United States Senator



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Mike Rounds  
United States Senator



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Brian Schatz  
United States Senator



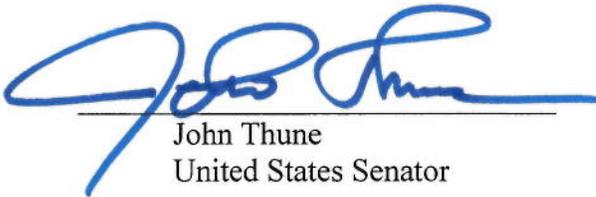
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Debbie Stabenow  
United States Senator



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Jon Tester  
United States Senator



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John Thune  
United States Senator



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Thom Tillis  
United States Senator



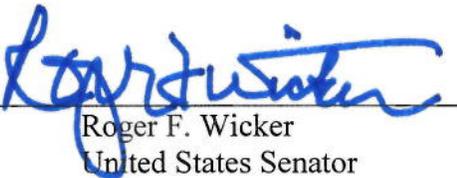
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Mark R. Warner  
United States Senator



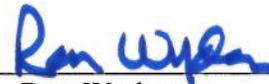
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Sheldon Whitehouse  
United States Senator



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Roger F. Wicker  
United States Senator



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Ron Wyden  
United States Senator