

March 1, 2018

The Honorable John Culberson
Chairman
House Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science, and Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Chairman
Senate Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science, and Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable José Serrano
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science, and Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jeanne Shaheen
Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science, and Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Appropriators:

As you complete final negotiations for the FY18 funding package and begin work on FY19, we write to encourage increased investment in the Part G Youth Mentoring Program. This important program supports youth-serving organizations throughout the country as they provide our nation's young people with caring adult mentors during some of the most challenging times in their lives. Mentoring supports positive outcomes, including social development, academic achievement, and improved self-confidence among at-risk young people.¹ **We respectfully ask that you invest in the future of our young people by funding the program at \$90 million in FY18 and at a minimum of \$100 million in FY19.**

Now, more than ever, we need the power of mentoring to build bridges in our communities and form bonds that change young peoples' lives. Youth-serving organizations build relationships that open the doors to opportunities and possibilities for hundreds of thousands of children across the county. Mentoring has been proven to be an effective prevention and intervention strategy. Mentoring shows positive results across a host of critical outcomes for young people, including school attendance, critical thinking, problem solving, youth violence prevention, leadership development, healthy relationships, improved mental health, and workforce development.

Unfortunately, the Youth Mentoring Program is now the only remaining federal grant exclusively dedicated to quality mentoring for our nation's youth, and it saw an 11 percent reduction in FY17. In a recent national representative survey, MENTOR found that two-thirds

¹ David DuBois, Jean Grossman, and Carla Herrera. *The Role of Risk: Mentoring Experiences and Outcomes for Youth with Varying Risk Profiles*. Public/Private Ventures distributed by MDRC, 2013.

of American adults believe it is highly important for youth to have these quality mentoring relationships and nearly nine out of ten feel *more* mentoring for young people is necessary. Further, 80 percent of Americans across political, geographic, and economic backgrounds support government investment in youth mentoring programs in addition to continued corporate, foundation, and charitable support.

Research on youth mentoring demonstrates that, at a minimum, for every dollar invested in quality mentoring programs there is a return of at least three dollars.² This positive return on investment reflects projected increases in lifetime earnings gained by leading at-risk youth down the path towards becoming productive adults. It also derives from dollars saved through reduced juvenile delinquency and crime, improved school attendance, increased high school graduation rates, and lowered risk of youth involvement in unsafe and costly behaviors such as drug and alcohol use.

Unfortunately, 1 in 3 young people in the United States reaches the age of 19 without having a mentor of any kind. This number includes 9 million at-risk youth who are missing out on the critical support and connections that mentoring can provide.³

As youth-serving organizations, we cannot underestimate the importance of the Youth Mentoring Program and the impact it has on creating safe and thriving communities. The bipartisan leadership on the Commerce, Justice, and Science Subcommittees have always demonstrated strong support for the needs of our young people and for quality youth mentoring. **We respectfully urge you to support these efficient and effective efforts by restoring the recent reduction to the program in the final FY18 bill and committing to increased investment in FY19.**

We appreciate your attention to a critical issue that affects our nation's young people.

Sincerely,

A World Fit for Kids!
Afterschool Alliance
After-School All-Stars
America SCORES
American Camp Association
America's Promise Alliance
ASPIRA Association
Big Brothers Big Sisters of America
Big Brothers Big Sisters of Hampden County
Boys & Girls Clubs of America
California Mentoring Partnership
Catholic Charities USA

² Paul Anton and Judy Temple. *Analyzing the Social Return on Investments in Youth Intervention Programs: A framework for Minnesota*. Wilder Research, 2007.

³ Bruce and Bridgeland, *The Mentoring Effect: Young People's Perspectives on the Outcomes and Availability of Mentoring*.

Center for Supportive Schools
College Mentors for Kids
College Mentors for Kids, Inc.
Communities in Schools
Disability Rights, Education, Activism, and Mentoring (DREAM)
Empowered To Overcome Inc.
Friends of the Children
Girl Scouts of the USA
Girls Inc.
Girls Inc. at YWCA Nashville & Middle Tennessee
Girls Inc. of Dothan
Girls Inc. of Fort Smith
Girls Inc. of Greater Los Angeles
Girls Inc. of Greater Lowell
Girls Inc. of Holyoke
Girls Inc. of Long Island
Girls Inc. of Metro Denver
Girls Inc. of Monroe County
Girls Inc. of Omaha
Girls Inc. of Orange County
Girls Inc. of San Antonio
Girls Inc. of Santa Fe
Girls Inc. of Shelbyville & Shelby County
Girls Inc. of Sioux City
Girls Inc. of the Greater Capital Region
Girls Inc. of the Pacific Northwest
Girls Inc. of Westchester County
Girls Inc. of Hamblen County
Girls Inc. of Kingsport
Girls Inc. of Tennessee Valley
Higher Achievement
Institute for Educational Leadership
Iowa Mentoring Partnership
MANY
Mass Mentoring Partnership
MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership
MENTOR Central Ohio
MENTOR Illinois
MENTOR Independence Region
MENTOR Minnesota
MENTOR New York
MENTOR Rhode Island
MENTOR Washington
Midlands Mentoring Partnership (Nebraska)
Mobius, Vermont's Mentoring Partnership

National 4-H Council
National Alliance of Faith and Justice
National CARES Mentoring Movement
National Disability Mentoring Coalition
National Human Services Assembly
National Urban League
NextBillion.org
Partners for Youth with Disabilities, Inc.
STEM Power
The First Tee
The Governor's Prevention Partnership (Connecticut)
U.S. Dream Academy
U.S. Soccer Foundation
YMCA of the USA
YouthBuild USA

CC: Chairman Rodney Frelinghuysen, House Appropriations Committee
Chairman Thad Cochran, Senate Appropriations Committee
Ranking Member Nita Lowey, House Appropriations Committee
Ranking Member Patrick Leahy, Senate Appropriations Committee
Members of the House and Senate Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies
Subcommittees