May 27, 2014

The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

As members of Congress who support United States leadership on global education, we urge your administration to commit $250 million over two years at the upcoming pledging conference for the Global Partnership for Education on June 26 in Brussels.

Despite efforts by the U.S. and the international community, 57 million children do not attend primary school and 250 million children – nearly 40 percent of the world’s children of primary school age – cannot read, write, or count. We know that we cannot end extreme poverty without education. If all students in low-income countries left school with basic reading skills, 171 million people could be lifted out of poverty.

The Global Partnership for Education (GPE) is the only international organization exclusively dedicated to ensuring all children have access to a quality education and are learning. The Partnership focuses on building strong, lasting education systems, not just the separate elements that make them up. It is the only global entity that brings all partners, including international donors, the private sector, and community groups, together around a single national education plan. Thanks to this model, countries like Somalia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and post-conflict Afghanistan are now implementing their first-ever national education plans.

If donors fulfill the Global Partnership’s replenishment target of $3.5 billion at the June pledging conference, the organization will be able to support 29 million children in primary and secondary school and help increase the number of children completing primary school with literacy and numeracy skills by 25 percent by 2018. Importantly, donor contributions have the power to leverage an additional $16 billion in developing country partners’ domestic financing for education.

To date, the Global Partnership for Education has allocated $3.7 billion to nearly 60 low-income countries. In the last ten years, the Partnership has assisted these partner countries to enroll 22 million children in school, construct over 53,000 classrooms, and train more than 300,000 teachers. Primary school net enrollment rates in GPE developing country partners rose from 66 percent in 2000 to 81 percent in 2011, a higher rate of improvement than developing countries not a part of the Partnership.
Once low-income countries join the Global Partnership, they demonstrate their commitment to educating their own people – on average, domestic financing to education as a share of the GDP in GPE countries increased by 10 percent after they joined the Global Partnership. Even now, more than 90 percent of education financing today comes from developing country governments themselves. It is up to the U.S. and other donors to help bridge the gaps that remain in poor and conflict-affected countries.

June’s pledging conference is a key opportunity to leverage other donors and developing countries through a U.S. pledge of $250 million over two years to the Global Partnership for Education. We urge you to demonstrate U.S. commitment to ensuring that all children have access to a quality basic education and are learning, and we look forward to working with you to ensure funding for this important initiative.

Sincerely,

Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress

Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress

Suzanne Bonamici
Member of Congress

G.K. Butterfield
Member of Congress

Lois Capps
Member of Congress

Michael Capuano
Member of Congress

André Carson
Member of Congress

Kathy Castor
Member of Congress

Katherine Clark
Member of Congress

Yvette Clarke
Member of Congress
John Garamendi  
Member of Congress

Gene Green  
Member of Congress

Raul Grijalva  
Member of Congress

Alcee L. Hastings  
Member of Congress

Denny Heck  
Member of Congress

Ruben Hinojosa  
Member of Congress

Rush Holt  
Member of Congress

Michael Honda  
Member of Congress

Sheila Jackson Lee  
Member of Congress

Henry C. "Hank" Johnson  
Member of Congress

Eddie Bernice Johnson  
Member of Congress

Marcy Kaptur  
Member of Congress

Derek Kilmer  
Member of Congress

Rick Larsen  
Member of Congress

Barbara Lee  
Member of Congress
Sander Levin
Member of Congress

Dave Loebsack
Member of Congress

Alan Lowenthal
Member of Congress

Michelle Lujan Grisham
Member of Congress

Carolyn McCarthy
Member of Congress

James P. McGovern
Member of Congress

Gregory Meeks
Member of Congress

John Lewis
Member of Congress

Zoe Lofgren
Member of Congress

Ben Ray Luján
Member of Congress

Carolyn Maloney
Member of Congress

Jim McDermott
Member of Congress

Jerry McNERNEY
Member of Congress

Gwen Moore
Member of Congress

James Moran
Member of Congress

Jerrold Nadler
Member of Congress
Jackie Speier  
Member of Congress

Adam Smith  
Member of Congress

Mark Takano  
Member of Congress

John Tierney  
Member of Congress

Dina Titus  
Member of Congress

Chris Van Hollen  
Member of Congress

Henry Waxman  
Member of Congress

The Honorable John Kerry, Secretary of State,  
The Honorable Rajiv Shah