

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 25, 2022

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chairwoman
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on
Labor, Health and Human Services
United States Senate
125 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on
Labor, Health and Human Services
United States Senate
135 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chair Murray and Ranking Member Blunt:

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) 2023. 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, including Basic Support Payments and Federal Properties, to ensure all federally connected school districts can provide a quality education.

Congress created Impact Aid in 1950 in recognition that the federal government needed to accept responsibility in areas impacted by a federal presence and 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 1,200 school districts nationwide. Impact Aid funds a range of programs, including facilities renovation, efforts to retain highly qualified teachers, provide adequate technology, and maintain transportation fleets. For many districts, this funding represents the very lifeblood that allows their school systems to operate.

Congress should prioritize Basic Support Payments to ensure the current payout level to school districts is maintained. For districts enrolling military children, the ability to address both the academic and emotional needs of these students must be sustained. 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 children who reside on Tribal lands—of whom over 93 percent are Native American—also must not be overlooked. These districts are vital to the development of culturally-responsive curricula, land-based learning, and strong community and cultural relationships that prepare students for lifelong success. These school districts are often located in rural areas, many of which have few taxpayers and where administrators double as bus drivers, teachers, and coaches. Impact Aid dollars help to provide a foundational education for all students and many schools would close their doors without its vital support.

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 Engineers 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. Congress should prioritize this funding stream to reflect the increased value of Federal land in Federal property districts.

Impact Aid funding also provides additional payments to school districts based on the number of federally connected children eligible for services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The Children with Disabilities line item has not received any increases in years and thus is not keeping up with inflation.

We urge you to support strong and continued funding for the entire Impact Aid Program. The potential of long-term funding stagnation or program cuts is of serious concern given the changing needs of federally-connected districts and the students they serve. Impact Aid is not only the federal government's obligation, but also a critical form of tax relief for local communities. Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of our request.

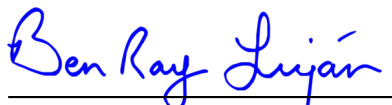
Sincerely,



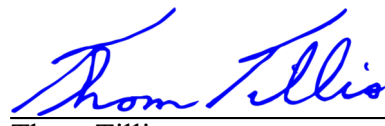
Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator




James M. Inhofe
United States Senator



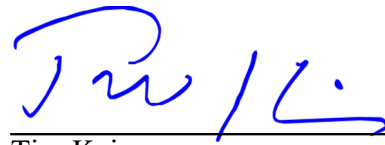
Ben Ray Lujan
United States Senator



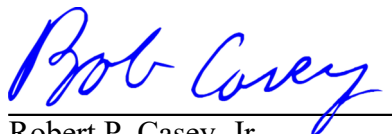
Thom Tillis
United States Senator



James E. Risch
United States Senator



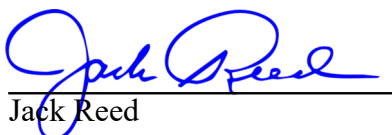
Tim Kaine
United States Senator



Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator



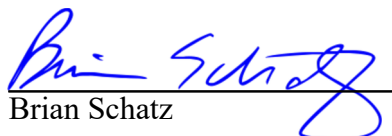
Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senator



Jack Reed
United States Senator



Maria Cantwell
United States Senator



Brian Schatz
United States Senator



Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator



Raphael G. Warnock
United States Senator



Dan Sullivan
United States Senator



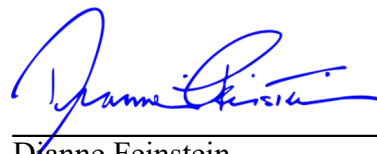
Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



Jon Ossoff
United States Senator



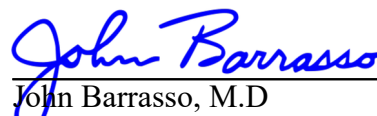
Robert Menendez
United States Senator



Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator



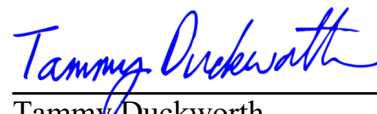
Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator



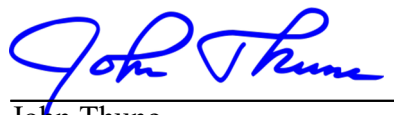
John Barrasso, M.D.
United States Senator



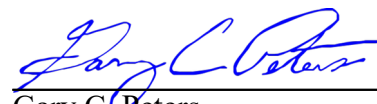
Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator



Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator



John Thune
United States Senator



Gary C. Peters
United States Senator



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



Mark Kelly
United States Senator



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



Kyrsten Sinema
United States Senator



Martin Heinrich
United States Senator



Alex Padilla
United States Senator



Jon Tester
United States Senator



Tina Smith
United States Senator



Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator



Mark R. Warner
United States Senator



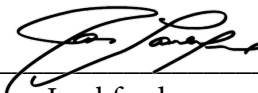
Cory A. Booker
United States Senator



Roger Marshall, M.D.
United States Senator



Mike Crapo
United States Senator



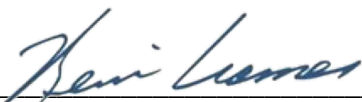
James Lankford
United States Senator



Cynthia Lummis
United States Senator



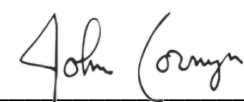
Steve Daines
United States Senator



Kevin Cramer
United States Senator



M. Michael Rounds
United States Senator



John Cornyn
United States Senator



John Hoeven
United States Senator