

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 26, 2015

The Honorable Edmund G. Brown, Jr.
Governor
State of California
California State Capitol, Suite 1173
Sacramento, California 95814

Dear Governor Brown:

We are writing to request your assistance in addressing the unmet needs of California's nearly 300,000 homeless schoolchildren through the enhancement of the School Supplies for Homeless Children Fund and California's utilization of federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grants. Over the last five years, there has been a 54 percent increase in the number of students experiencing homelessness, not including an estimated 30,000 additional homeless children in preschool.

Based on several surveys, statements of need from county offices of education, and other child advocacy sources, it is clear that the basic material needs of California's homeless children are not being met. In practice, this means when school districts identify a homeless child, and their parent/guardian fills out a supplemental residency questionnaire, which includes a basic material needs assessment (socks, shoes, hygiene items, dental items, etc.), the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act mandated school district homeless liaisons have no resources to offer. This lack of resources is a significant contributing factor to a student's poor academic, health, and social outcomes.

The School Supplies for Homeless Children Fund, created in 2014, receives contributions from individuals on personal income tax returns and assists in providing basic material needs to homeless students. To date, the program has received a 153 percent match from private resources and reached every county in California this year. While successful, the fund receives only \$1.00-\$1.76 per homeless child annually.

Current efforts directed to expand this program and make it more stable and predictable would serve the community well. Finding a permanent funding solution would achieve these goals. Previous and ongoing efforts in the State legislature have garnered similar support from private industry with pledges of up to 100 percent match to public funds if the state chooses to act.

The federal TANF program is designed to assist needy families to achieve self-sufficiency. The first of four purposes of TANF is to provide "assistance" to needy families, with assistance defined in part as "...benefits designed to meet a family's ongoing basic needs," which includes the unmet material needs of homeless children (45 CFR 260.20). Pending proposals in the state legislature could provide approximately \$16.80 per homeless child totaling \$5 million dollars. This is in comparison to the \$3.8 billion the State of California receives annually. Ensuring homeless children in California have the same opportunities as their peers is essential to their academic and social success and will benefit the state's economy.

We respectfully request your full and fair consideration of unobligated TANF funds as a potential remedy for the unmet material needs of our state's nearly 300,000 homeless children and youth. Thank you for taking the time to consider our thoughts on this matter.

Sincerely,



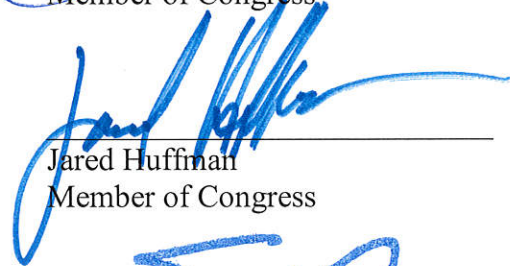
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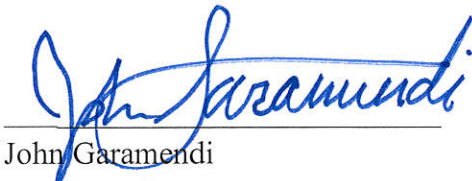
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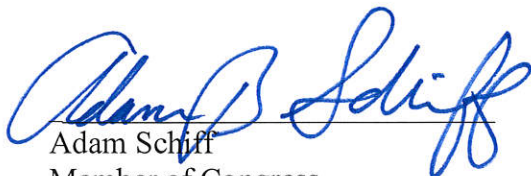
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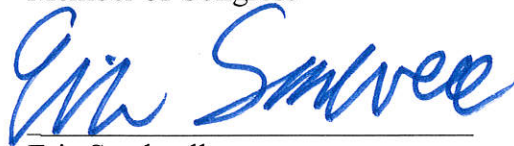
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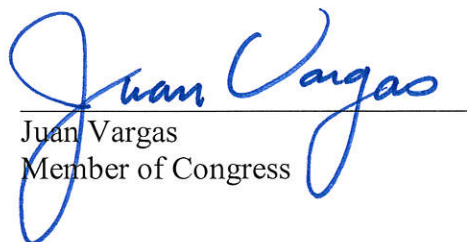
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