

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

July 2, 2009

The Honorable David Obey  
Chairman  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
H 218 – The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Obey,

We would like to express our support for the Administration's 2010 budget request of \$1.55 billion to increase high school graduation for low income students in struggling schools. The requested \$1.5 billion for ESEA Title I School Improvement Grants supports district and school efforts to implement proven strategies to turn around schools and put students on track. As you know, the previous Administration was more interested in funding efforts to identify failing schools than it was in supplying resources to turn those schools around. We now have the opportunity to support teachers and schools in doing what works.

The request also includes \$50 million for the High School Graduation Initiative. This money, competitively awarded, will address "dropout factories," those high schools where fewer than 60% of students graduate. High school completion is a priority for the Congressional Black Caucus, Congressional Hispanic Caucus and Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus. African American, Latino and some Asian American and Pacific Islander students are grossly overrepresented among our nation's dropouts. In addition, students of color are far more likely to attend schools with highly concentrated poverty where high school graduation is not always the norm. "Dropout factories" are responsible for almost 75% of minority student dropouts. One in three minority students attends a dropout factory.

These programs will greatly benefit our constituents and improve elementary and secondary education in high-need districts across the country. This \$1.55 billion investment will provide long overdue resources to secondary schools for effective interventions, including comprehensive school improvement strategies and dropout prevention programs, to improve academic achievement and raise graduation rates.

We appreciate your consideration. Please contact Liz King in Congressman Fattah's office with any questions at [Elizabeth.King@mail.house.gov](mailto:Elizabeth.King@mail.house.gov) or x54001.

Sincerely,

J. Butterfield

Danny K. Davis

Joe Ann

Elijah E. Tompkins

Abigail

Paul Carter

Faloua

John Longenecker

Billy Sue

Wm. Lutz Clay

Calvin Fattel

Ruben Hinojosa

Conin Brown