

November 29, 2018

The Honorable Judy Chu  
United States House of Representatives  
2423 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Lucille Roybal-Allard  
United States House of Representatives  
2083 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Eleanor Holmes Norton  
United States House of Representatives  
2136 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representatives Chu, Roybal-Allard, and Norton

I am writing on behalf of First Focus Campaign for Children, a bipartisan children's advocacy organization dedicated to making children and families the priority in federal policy and budget decisions, to applaud your leadership on the introduction of the Developing Innovative Partnerships and Learning Opportunities that Motivate Achievement Act (DIPLOMA Act). First Focus Campaign for Children strongly supports the DIPLOMA Act. Children are our country's future economic, political, and social leaders, and each child deserves an equal opportunity to maximize their potential through access to quality education. To that end, evidence demonstrates that effective partnerships between schools and communities increase student achievement by addressing the needs of students both in and out of the classroom.

The DIPLOMA Act aims to utilize this evidence-based strategy to ensure that students from low-income families or underperforming schools have the support system they need to engage and succeed both in school and their community. Forming these connections have proven to decrease suspension and absentee rates, increase graduation rates, improve emotional health, strengthen access to pre-school, and lower drop out rates, among other important benefits. The bill also provides structural provisions that will work to sustain community-based supports in the form of community consortiums of public and private institutions as well as a coordinating body to facilitate and strengthen community connections. A child's education is one of the most important investments we can make as a country, and the DIPLOMA Act would be an important contribution to that investment.

Again, we appreciate your leadership on the DIPLOMA Act and look forward to working with you to advance this legislation now and in the 116<sup>th</sup> Congress.

Sincerely,

*Bruce Lesley*

Bruce Lesley  
President