



Public policy  
in the best interest  
of children.

July 12, 2017

Hon. John Moolenaar  
117 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Moolenaar:

As the Subcommittee begins its work on the FY 2018 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations Bill tomorrow, we are writing to urge you to think carefully about cuts to critical services, particularly those that include ample evidence of their effectiveness. Cuts to cost-effective services for your constituents are further at risk in light of Michigan's heavy reliance on federal funding coupled with our inability to pick up significant service costs.

Your committee has an opportunity to begin the budget conversation in a way that moves us towards more opportunity for all and is an engine for economic progress by maintaining and increasing supports for critical programs rather than excluding children and families who need them. We offer a few examples:

Improving Access to and Quality of Child Care. As you know, families need affordable, high quality child care for their young children, and after-school and summer learning opportunities for their school-aged children while parents work or are in job training. Access to high quality child care can ensure that young children are building the foundation they need to succeed in school and life. High quality expanded learning programs ensure school-aged children stay engaged in learning and remain academically on-track. The research is clear that these types of high quality options provide the greatest benefit to the most challenged children and youth for optimal success in school. And, it allows parents to stay connected to their own skill building and employment so that they can build a stable foundation from which their families can flourish.

1. **Increase support for the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG).** Access to high quality child care utilizing the state's low level of subsidy is very challenging and the quality of programs families are able to purchase through the subsidy system still vary significantly. At the same time, thousands of additional families with significantly limited income are still unable to access the subsidy. But progress is beginning. After many years of neglect, Michigan is finally investing enough state resource to draw down all of the CCDBG funding allocated to us, allowing for increased payments to child care providers and more families access to those supports. Now is not the time to cut federal funding when the research is clear both about improved outcomes for children, but also about improved employment outcomes for parents who access affordable and dependable care.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### Officers

**Kristen McDonald, Chair**  
*Greater Midland*

**Shaun Wilson, Vice Chair**  
*Truscott Rossman*

**Kurt Strehlke, Treasurer**  
*Bank of America*

**Terry Murphy, Immediate Past Chair**  
*Retired – Certified Public Accountant*

### Directors

**Yazeed Moore**  
*W.K. Kellogg Foundation*

**Tony Stamas**  
*Small Business Association of Michigan*

**Diana Wong**  
*Eastern Michigan University*

**John Ziraldo**  
*The Skillman Foundation*

**Matthew Gillard**  
*President and CEO*

2. **Maintain support for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Center (21<sup>st</sup> CCLC) program.** While this program has proven, evaluated, Michigan-specific education outcomes for participants, including eliminating summer learning loss and improving reading and math performance, Michigan's share of current funds are able to support fewer than one-third of the best programs applying. There is limited Michigan investment beyond the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC program for quality programming in Michigan, and any cuts to the program would not likely be made up through state funding, resulting in even more limited programming.

Maintain Stability for Children and Youth. Not unlike other programs, virtually all of Michigan efforts to prevent child maltreatment and care for children and youth who have been removed from their families are funded through federal sources. Any disinvestment in those federal programs would have catastrophic impact on the most vulnerable children and youth in this state.

1. **Increase support for Title IV-E.** As family instability grows and the needs of those families and their children are better known and understood, federal investment in supports need to grow as well. Efforts to enable states to utilize IV-E funding in innovative ways that best support families and children in their state are essential.
2. **Maintain support for the Social Services Block Grant.** Michigan utilizes the SSBG to support our protective services and foster care programs for children and adults, and relies almost entirely on the SSBG funds to support innovative programs for foster youth transitioning to adulthood like the Michigan Youth Opportunities Initiative. Cuts to or elimination of the SSBG would be counter-productive, resulting in fewer services to the very children and young people that the state bears responsibility for.

Michigan's Children is the only statewide independent voice working to ensure that policymakers like yourself prioritize the needs of the children, youth and families shouldering the most challenging circumstances. As you know, our children are our future teachers, business owners, scientists, artists and elected officials. If we want children in Michigan to be successful in school and in life, we must ensure that our public policies and programs can help them access the opportunities they need to succeed.

We look forward to working with you, your colleagues and your constituents as the budget process continues to move forward. Please don't hesitate to contact us for more information or to help connect you with programs and families that illustrate the impact that these crucial programs and others have on their lives.

Sincerely,



Matthew Gillard  
President and CEO

Attachments:  
2017 Policy Priorities  
Federal Action Must Protect Michigan Children