



House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

June 12, 2017

The Honorable Tom Wolf
Governor of Pennsylvania
225 Main Capitol Building
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17120

Dear Governor Wolf:

As we move closer to the annual state budget deadline, we know that you are working in earnest to bring a final budget to a vote by the end of June. We are supportive of that effort and we are ready to help you accomplish that goal. Like you, however, our commitment to an on-time budget is predicated on being able to vote for a budget that is good for Pennsylvania.

We want you to know that we are very proud of your wise budget proposal of a \$75 million increase in pre-k funding because high quality pre-k programs efficiently prepare children to succeed in school and in life. Nobel winning economist James Heckman found that for every \$1 spent on high quality pre-k, taxpayers benefit from at least \$7 in avoided safety net costs, reduced criminal justice costs and higher tax receipts. That strong return on investment doesn't even include the immediate returns in our communities from the job creation and multiplier effect of expanding the early learning sector across the Commonwealth.

In fact, Pennsylvania joins 27 other states and the District of Columbia having made the wise investment in high-quality pre-k. However, among this group, we rank 18th—in the bottom half—in per capita investments and far behind our strong competitor states including New Jersey and New York.

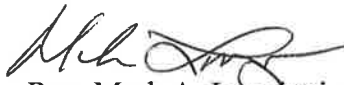
We recognize that getting to a balanced budget that can pass both chambers is very hard work. We also know that 64% of children, eligible for publicly funded pre-k, are not able to enroll in these programs and as a result their lives are harder than they should be. We simply cannot take a slow growth approach toward the creation of a system where every child eligible for publicly funded pre-k can attend the program.

As you know, funding for early learning for children is the place where Democrats and Republicans can find agreement. But we need to be certain that increases in pre-k are not made possible by reductions in child care and home visiting programs because the success of high quality pre-k is dependent on these partner programs. It is important to note that a strong pre-k

system is dependent on an appropriately financed child care system. In fact, nearly 50% of the children enrolled in publicly-funded pre-k programs are served in child care programs. We will support a budget that also restores the financial resources your budget provided to these key early learning support programs. Dr. Heckman's research shows that when the appropriate supports are put in place along with pre-k, including high quality child care for children under five years old and home visiting supports, the return on investment grows as well.

A budget that is good for Pennsylvania is one that spends money in ways that reduce the long-term cost of government and make communities more vibrant. We stand firmly behind your efforts to lead with your budget proposals for strong pre-k and early learning investments because it's these programs that are proven to achieve these results.

Sincerely,



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CC: The Honorable William Danowski, Secretary of Legislative Affairs, Office of the Governor
Mr. Michael Brunelle, Chief of Staff, Office of the Governor