

**United States Senate**  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 12, 2005

The Honorable Arlen Specter  
Chairman  
Senate Labor, HHS and Education  
Appropriations Subcommittee  
711 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Harkin  
Ranking Member  
Senate Labor, HHS and Education  
Appropriations Subcommittee  
731 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Specter and Ranking Member Harkin:

We urge your subcommittee to provide an increase in funding for the Innovative Education Strategies State Grants program or Title V, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) for Fiscal Year (FY) 2006. This grant program provides one of the most flexible and critical sources of funding for our states and their school districts.

Due to the flexible nature of Innovative State Grants, these funds are often the sole source of support for the many unique education needs of the nation's schools and are instrumental in helping them meet the requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB, P.L. 107-110). School districts use Title V funds to support the recruitment and training of highly qualified teachers. In states where there are severe teacher shortages, school districts use these funds to supplement Title II, Part A funds. This funding supports teacher quality activities, including valuable professional development and recruitment.

If students are to perform at a proficient or above level, as required by NCLB, instruction must be improved. Accordingly, schools use Title V funds to both support the use of technology and data and align curriculum with state standards and assessments, to improve instruction. These initiatives support the goal of NCLB to achieve proficiency for all students.

In addition, Title V, Part A funds support countless effective programs tailored to meet the individual needs of both urban and rural states. School districts use Title V, Part A funding to support gifted and talented programs – Title V is the only ESEA program that allows the use of funds for gifted and talented programs. Also, schools use this funding to provide technology support and upgrades for rural areas, to establish pre-schools, summer schools and alternative schools, and to create and maintain innumerable literacy initiatives.

As you know, the President's Fiscal Year (FY) 2006 Budget request included \$100 million for the Innovative Education Strategies State Grants program – a decrease

of \$98 million from FY 2005. A reduction of Title V funds may erode the phenomenal progress the nation's schools have made under the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act. In view of this, it is imperative that we restore funding for this program to the FY 2004 level of \$296 million.

We wholeheartedly support the funding level of \$296 million for the Innovative Education Strategies Grants program. We look forward to working with you on this important matter.

Sincerely,

