



USU

Coalition of

Urban Serving Universities

ASSOCIATION OF
PUBLIC AND
LAND-GRANT
UNIVERSITIES



June 30, 2011

Hon. Tom Harkin

Chairman

U.S. Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee

428 Dirksen Senate Office Building

Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Harkin,

The Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (A·P·L·U) and the Coalition of Urban Serving Universities (USU) believe that all students should have access to a high-quality education from the very beginning through the end of what we call the education pipeline—a structure of multi-faceted, community-supported initiatives and programs that extend from pre-Kindergarten to college and into a career. Therefore, we are writing in support of the Promise Neighborhoods Act of 2011. This important legislation would fund national competitive grants to implement cradle-to-career “continuums of care” for all children in distressed neighborhoods and to ensure they have the services they need to succeed in the classroom and beyond.

Urban school children face many challenges. They are more likely to come from low-income families and non-English speaking homes. Graduation rates and exam scores for these students typically fall below state and national averages. Additionally, these children and their families do not have access to high-quality programs and support needed to ensure children enter the classroom prepared to learn, that they are successful in school, and that they graduate from high school ready for college and a career.

A·P·L·U is the nation’s oldest higher education association, and USU is a network of public urban research universities that represents every region of our country. Together these two organizations launched the Office of Urban Initiatives, which is focused on harnessing the power of universities and their partners to restore economic prosperity and improve the quality of life for residents in urban communities. Our members work closely with leaders in their home states and in Washington, D.C., to advocate for policies and practices that leverage the individual and collective impact of our member institutions to make transformative investments in their regions.

Ensuring the Promise Neighborhoods Act of 2011 becomes law is critical to promoting the overall well-being of students in high-need areas and guaranteeing the same right to support and education services as all other students.

Many of our member institutions are currently working to implement a cradle-to-career pipeline in their communities by connecting in innovative ways the education, business, nonprofit, civic, and philanthropic and community sectors in efforts to help every child achieve success. However, no federal statute currently exists to ensure that as many students and families as possible have access to critical support services and programs. The Promise Neighborhoods Act fills that gap.

We look forward to working with you and Members of the Committee to advance this all-important legislation, as well as the broad reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

Sincerely,



Peter McPherson
President, A·P·L·U



Nancy L. Zimpher
Chair, USU
Chancellor, State University of New York