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April 5, 2012

The Honorable Daniel Inouye
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Hal Rogers
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Norm Dicks
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Inouye, Ranking Member Cochran, Chairman Rogers, and Ranking Member Dicks:

I write to urge that federal appropriations for fiscal year 2013 target resources to programs that will continue our economic recovery by promoting and supporting job growth.

While the below list is not exhaustive, cutting, and in some cases even level funding these programs, would harm key drivers of economic growth and services which ensure our workforce is both effective and well matched to growing sectors.

Closing the Skills Gap

Time and again I hear from business leaders in Massachusetts that they are unable to fill open positions because job applicants don't have the required skills or proper training. We have a skills gap that is hindering our economic recovery, but we can do something about it. Through targeted investments in education and job training programs we can ensure all of our workers are prepared for success.

Only through a strong educational foundation can we equip our students with the tools needed to compete for jobs in an increasingly knowledge-based global economy. For these reasons, despite persistent fiscal challenges, as in prior years my recently submitted budget includes a record investment in K-12 education. Similarly, as Title I funding for disadvantaged students remains the federal government's principal investment in primary and secondary education, I urge you to increase, or at the very least maintain, Title I education funding at the FY2012 enacted level of \$14.5 billion. Any reduction in Title I funds will reduce the number of students and staff supported by Title I and will hamper our efforts to close the achievement gap and prepare every Massachusetts student for future success.

The Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program also plays critical role in ensuring disadvantaged children receive the nutrition necessary to enter school ready to learn. WIC is particularly important to Massachusetts, where the program serves nearly half of all newborns. WIC children benefit from improved cognitive performance in the classroom, better vocabularies, and higher digit memory scores. I commend the Obama Administration's \$7.04 billion proposal for the WIC program, an increase of approximately \$423 million from the FY2012 enacted level. This increase is necessary as many families are still struggling to find their footing as our nation continues its recovery.

Workforce training and retraining complements a robust educational foundation. Since job growth by sector is dynamic, it is essential that sufficient resources be provided to make sure those looking for work have the skills required by those looking for workers. Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Title I programs offer funding specifically for this purpose, and I

strongly support the Administration's request to maintain funding for this important program at roughly \$2.6 billion.

Fifteen percent of WIA Title I funding has traditionally been allocated for statewide activities. Massachusetts has used this funding to target training in growth sectors like healthcare and hospitality, improve data collection to better understand the skills gap, and target resources to populations which are currently not well served under WIA Title I, like the chronically unemployed, disconnected youth, ESOL populations, and ex-offenders. Altogether, we are serving over 3,400 individuals in these programs. However, if last year's cut to WIA Title I's statewide activities is continued, Massachusetts will again lose close to \$6 million, or nearly 70 percent of our statewide allocation. At a time when training and retraining is more critical than ever, this cut would cost us more workforce personnel and completely halt all future innovative state WIA programming.

Infrastructure

Economic growth is both facilitated and sustained by robust infrastructure. Commerce relies on well-maintained roads, bridges, and an effective mass transit system. Economic growth also depends on a healthy population, safe communities, and a strong national defense.

I support the President's request for a six-year, \$476 billion transportation reauthorization bill which would roughly double resources for highway, safety, passenger rail, and multimodal programs. If Congress is unable to broaden its infrastructure investments, at the very least, I urge Congress to provide \$42 billion for federal-aid highway programs and \$10.6 billion in transit funding, level with the amounts enacted in FY2012. I also support providing at least \$500 million for the successful Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) program, which supports 21st century projects that reduce gridlock and promote job creation.

Just as our highways and rail lines make up the base of our transportation framework, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) provides the backbone of our investment in medical research. NIH-backed research is an enormous economic asset. In FY2011 alone, NIH investment supported 432,000 jobs and generated more than \$62 billion in new

economic activity nationally. Massachusetts received just over \$2.5 billion in FY2011, which supported more than 34,000 jobs. Because of NIH's importance to our economy and numerous Massachusetts institutions, I urge you to provide NIH with at least \$32 billion in FY2013, or roughly \$1.3 billion over FY2012 levels. This investment would allow NIH to continue its vital role in improving health through medical breakthroughs while at the same time maintaining the U.S.'s international leadership in science and biomedical research.

Leveraging medical advances, our public health infrastructure works to protect our country's health and quality of life, reduce health care costs for families and businesses, and increase over-all productivity. The Preventive Health and Health Services Block Grant provides flexible funding for states to address our own unique public health priorities and enhances the effectiveness of other programs by leveraging resources to improve preventive services. I urge you to fund this program at the FY2011 enacted level of \$100 million. I also urge that you fund the 317 Immunization program at \$720 million. This roughly \$100 million increase from last year's enacted level would ensure that all children regardless of their income have access to the vaccines they need against deadly childhood diseases.

Federal investment also plays an important role in ensuring that local homeland security and public safety initiatives remain robust. I support the President's request for \$2.9 billion for the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) grant programs. Of these programs, the State Homeland Security Grant Program (SHSGP) is particularly important to the Commonwealth. To ensure that our first responders and other emergency preparedness personnel are adequately trained, staffed, and equipped, I urge that SHSGP receive at least \$655 million or equivalent resources should Congress move to adopt Administration's proposal to consolidate FEMA's preparedness grant programs.

Our national defense infrastructure must also be capably maintained. I support the President's budget proposal to streamline the Defense Department in response to changing technological and geopolitical landscapes. However, I am deeply concerned with cuts proposed by the Air Force that would negatively impact the unique advanced technological and operational services of the Massachusetts military. As a result of these

proposed cuts, Massachusetts would lose a total 241 civilian and uniform jobs. Of this total, the Air Force's disproportionate cuts to the Air National Guard would eliminate 170 positions. Understanding the need to achieve additional efficiencies at the Pentagon, I believe we can do so equitably and in a manner that recognizes that the Commonwealth's military assets – in, for example cyber security and intelligence – are both important and not easily replicated.

Supporting Workers and Their Families

For many struggling to regain their footing, adequate support can frequently mean the difference between returning to the workforce in an effective capacity, and falling further into poverty.

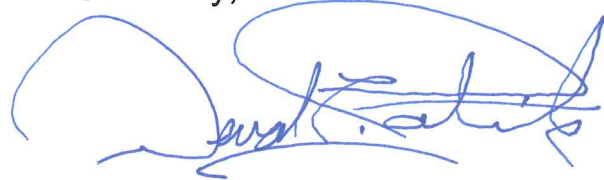
The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) is a particularly valuable program which provides an essential lifeline for over 210,000 families in the Commonwealth who, because of economic hardship, are struggling to pay home heating bills. LIHEAP assistance can eliminate the heartbreaking dilemma faced by families of limited means who would otherwise have to choose between food, medicine, and heating their home. Given our still-recovering economy and continuing volatility in home heating oil prices, I strongly urge that LIHEAP be funded at \$5.1 billion or the level last authorized by Congress. Currently, the program only has resources to pay approximately 40 percent of a LIHEAP-assisted household's heating bill. At today's prices, a \$5.1 billion allocation would allow Massachusetts to boost LIHEAP benefits by approximately 50 percent.

The Community Service Block Grant (CSBG) is another important program which provides housing, education, and employment services for low income populations. I urge that it, at minimum, be level funded at \$677 million.

As we have seen in Massachusetts, targeting investments toward helping to close the skills and achievement gaps, bolstering community infrastructure, and providing families with the resources they need to get back on their feet will help speed our economic recovery and expand job growth. As you work to set appropriations for the coming fiscal year, I urge

that you invest with these important priorities in mind. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "Paul G. Ryan", written in a cursive style.

Cc: Senator John Kerry
Senator Scott Brown
Congressman Ed Markey
Congressman Barney Frank
Congressman Richard Neal
Congressman John W. Olver
Congressman John F. Tierney
Congressman Jim McGovern
Congressman Michael E. Capuano
Congressman Stephen Lynch
Congresswoman Niki Tsongas
Congressman Bill Keating