

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

December 18, 2003

President George W. Bush
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

You and the First Lady have made it clear that education is paramount domestically as well as internationally. Representing the United States upon our reentry into UNESCO in September, Mrs. Bush said:

“... I believe education is our most urgent priority and should have the first and highest call on our time and resources. Education is vital to developing nations and generations. ... (W)e are committed to literacy and to providing a basic primary education for every person in every remote corner of the world.”

Your National Security Strategy sets forth defense, diplomacy, and development as the three tenets of U.S. national security and notes that literacy and learning are the foundation of democracy and development. Americans have learned from recent events around the world that our security rests directly upon the prosperity, stability, and tolerance of other countries, and that education can make a significant difference on how a country develops.

As the United States hosts the G-8 Summit next June, your administration can galvanize the world community to achieve Education for All by 2015. Several initiatives over recent years have created the framework for reaching that goal. At the Dakar World Education Conference, the commitment was made that no country with a credible national education plan would lack for resources. While developing nations have begun to make the critical and often difficult policy and budget decisions, donor countries have yet to provide sufficient resources.

Various estimates place the foreign assistance requirement to reach universal basic education at \$5.6–8 billion a year. A significant US contribution would be a small price to pay if it catalyzes an international effort to bring education to the 115 million children who have never entered a classroom.

In recent years, the United States has made education a greater priority. The Congress and the Administration have demonstrated their commitment to education by increasing bilateral assistance for basic education from a little over \$100 million in FY 2001 to \$250 million in FY 2003. Furthermore, it is anticipated that improving education will be an important objective

under the \$5 billion Millennium Challenge Account.

We urge you to take the opportunity of the G-8 Summit to launch a significant U.S. initiative on basic education. As happened with the announcement of the Millennium Challenge Account prior to the 2002 Monterrey Financing for Development Conference, the declaration of a new, robust U.S. program on basic education would inspire the donor community to make similar commitments and set the world on course to achieving the goal of Education for All.

Bold steps to ensure that no child is left behind *anywhere in the world* will marshal bipartisan and enthusiastic backing from the Congress and the American people. Taking a leadership role in education internationally also will engender global support. The United States is seen as a leader in education, and people around the world, regardless of nationality or political views, admire what this country has accomplished in education—and look to us for direction

We stand with you to make this vision a reality.

Sincerely,



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



Susan M. Collins
United States Senator



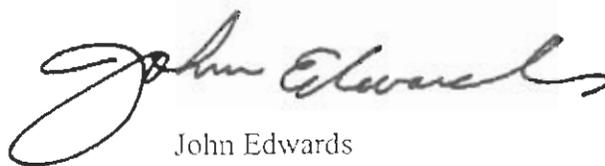
Mary L. Landrieu
United States Senator



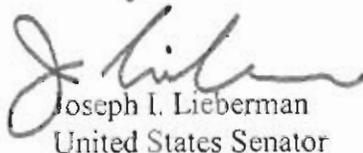
Arlen Specter
United States Senator



Jeff Bingaman
United States Senator



John Edwards
United States Senator



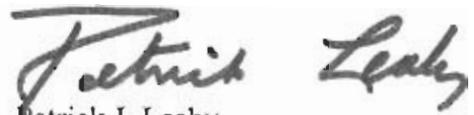
Joseph I. Lieberman
United States Senator



Lisa Murkowski
United States Senator



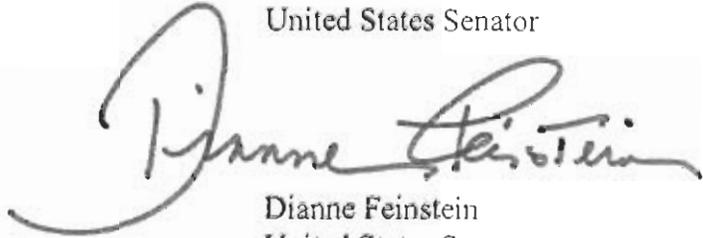
Maria Cantwell
United States Senator



Patrick J. Leahy
United States Senator



Jon S. Corzine
United States Senator



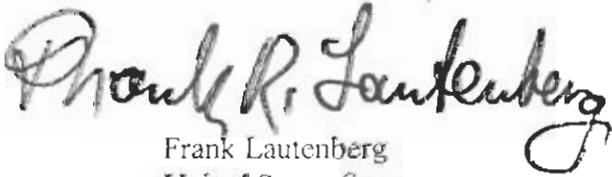
Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator



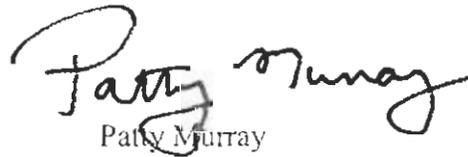
Lamar Alexander
United States Senator



Byron L. Dorgan
United States Senator



Frank Lautenberg
United States Senator



Patty Murray
United States Senator



Paul S. Sarbanes
United States Senator



Tim Johnson
United States Senator