December 10, 2019

The Honorable Richard Shelby  
Chairman  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nita Lowey  
Chairwoman  
House Appropriations Committee  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Patrick Leahy  
Ranking Member  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kay Granger  
Ranking Member  
House Appropriations Committee  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Appropriators:

We write in support of the Youth Mentoring Program grant, funded through the Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies subcommittee bill. As you are aware, the Youth Mentoring Program is a competitive grant that supports the work of youth serving organizations across the country as they provide our nation’s young people with caring adult mentors during some of the most challenging times in their lives. It also funds the National Mentoring Resource Center (NMRC), an online hub providing free tools, resources, evidence reviews, research, program models, coaching, and more. Through the NMRC, mentoring programs, schools, and other mentoring providers can access customized training and technical assistance to improve and build upon their services. The NMRC’s goal is to support mentoring programs in incorporating evidence-based practices to improve the effectiveness of programming for youth.

As Affiliates of MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership, we support mentoring programs across the country. We provide the leadership and infrastructure necessary to support the expansion of quality mentoring relationships through evidence-based practices. We serve as a clearinghouse for training, resources, public awareness, and advocacy. We advance the quality of the local mentoring field in our respective cities and states by building relationships with new and existing mentoring programs and providing capacity-building trainings and technical assistance grounded in evidence-based approaches. In this role, we understand the critical need for quality tools, resources, and training for programs mentoring America’s youth.

Youth mentoring is an important support that improves positive social development and behaviors in young people. Mentoring has a positive effect on students that are at risk of falling off track. Young people who meet regularly with their mentors are 52 percent less likely than their peers to skip a day of school and youth with recurring
behavioral problems who have a mentor maintain better attitudes towards school. Youth who meet regularly with their mentors are 46 percent less likely than their peers to start using illegal drugs. Young people who face opportunity gaps but have mentors are 130 percent more likely to hold a leadership position. Mentors also provide youth, especially those at risk of being disconnected from school and work, with access to social capital and opportunities. Young people who face opportunity gaps but had a mentor were 55 percent more likely to enroll in college than their peers. Mentors prepare young people for higher education and careers by introducing youth to resources they weren’t familiar with, helping them set career goals and even using their personal contacts to help connect them and find careers in industries they did not have access to within their networks.

As you finalize negotiations for the FY20 spending we call for continued investment in the Youth Mentoring Program grant, a proven prevention and intervention program, at the House-passed level of $100 million.

Thank you for your time and support.

Sincerely,

MENTOR Colorado
The Governor’s Prevention Partnership (CT)
United Way of Palm Beach County Mentor Center (FL)
MENTOR Illinois
MENTOR Indiana
Iowa Mentoring Partnership
Maryland MENTOR
Mass Mentoring Partnership
MENTOR Minnesota
MENTOR Nebraska
The Newark Mentoring Movement
MENTOR New York
MENTOR North Carolina
MENTOR Central Ohio
MENTOR Independence Region (PA)
The Mentoring Partnership of Southwestern PA
MENTOR Rhode Island
MENTOR Memphis Grizzlies (TN)
MENTOR Vermont
MENTOR Virginia
MENTOR Washington
MENTOR Greater Milwaukee

CC: Chairman Jerry Moran, Senate Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies Subcommittee

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Ranking Member Jeanne Shaheen, Senate Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies Subcommittee
Chairman José Serrano, House Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies Subcommittee
Ranking Member Robert Aderholt, House Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies Subcommittee
Members of the House and Senate Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies Subcommittees