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March 9, 2023

The Honorable Mike Thompson
United States House of Representatives
268 Cannon Office Building
Washington D.C. 20515**RE: SUPPORT, FY 2024 Congressionally Directed Spending Request for the Vallejo Early Learning Center Project**

Dear Congressman Thompson:

On behalf of the Solano County Board of Supervisors, I am writing to urge you to seek \$3 million in Fiscal Year 2024 Congressionally Directed Spending for the Vallejo Early Learning Center (ELC) project. This important project involves the renovation of a shuttered elementary school for the purpose of establishing a facility that will provide early care and education opportunities for children and families of all income levels in one of the most under-resourced neighborhoods in Solano County.

The ELC is a multi-partner project led by the First 5 Solano Children and Families Commission in conjunction with a local Head Start provider, the Vallejo City Unified School District, the Solano County Office of Education, and private childcare and early learning providers. Solano County's ELC will be the first of its kind in California and will serve as a model for other communities where a lack of childcare facilities is a barrier to early childhood learning expansion and where there are surplus school sites.

A large body of research has demonstrated a multitude of short- and long-term benefits of quality early care and education programs for children. By way of illustration, children who attend these types of programs are more likely to have the language, literacy, mathematics, executive functioning, and social skills needed to be ready for kindergarten. Unfortunately, in Solano County, many children are left out of a quality early learning and care experience due to a lack of appropriate facilities. In fact, the availability of child care is lower in Solano County than in other counties in the region and the state, with a recent analysis showing that only one out of four children in the County who needed child care had a licensed child care slot, and less than half of 3- to 4-year-olds had a preschool experience.

To address this priority community need, the ELC project will employ a dual-pronged approach that will offer high quality early learning opportunities for children, as well as safe and consistent childcare for working families. All told, the ELC project will serve 200 infants through preschoolers and families annually. In addition, there will be approximately 65 staff at the facility, including an onsite team of "Quality Counts" early-learning coaches provided by the Solano County Office of Education.

Finally, Solano County has made this project a top local priority and has already secured over \$10.8 million for the renovation of the ELC facility. The \$3 million in Congressionally Directed Spending will help the County complete this highly meritorious, shovel-ready project.

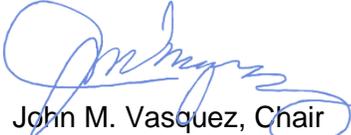
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Thank you for your support and for your consideration of this critically important community project request.

Sincerely,



John M. Vasquez, Chair
Solano County Board of Supervisors

CC:

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein, U.S. Senator

The Honorable Alex Padilla, U.S. Senator

The Honorable John Garamendi, U.S. Representative

The Honorable Bill Dodd, California State Senator

The Honorable Lori D. Wilson, California State Assemblymember

The Honorable Solano County Board of Supervisors

Michele Harris, Executive Director, First 5 Solano

Karen Lange, SYASL Partners