

United States Senate

June 7, 2021

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chair
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education, and Related Agencies
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education, and Related Agencies
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chair Murray and Ranking Member Blunt:

Thank you for your commitment to employment opportunities for older Americans by funding the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) at \$405,000,000 in fiscal year (FY) 2021. As you prepare your appropriations bill for FY 2022, we ask that you fund SCSEP with the U.S. Department of Labor at least \$480,900,800, the amount authorized for FY22 in the bipartisan 2020 Older Americans Act reauthorization.

SCSEP is the only federal employment program dedicated to helping older Americans return to the workforce. Through the program, low-income older job seekers from every state learn new work skills and contribute to their communities through paid community training at schools, hospitals, senior centers and other non-profit or public facilities. Each year, approximately 55,000 older Americans with significant barriers to employment train at community employers and earn paychecks through SCSEP.

SCSEP is meeting the goals established by Congress: to promote individual economic self-sufficiency and to increase unsubsidized employment of unemployed Americans age 55 and older. Every older adult who participates in SCSEP increases their individual economic self-sufficiency through the regular paychecks they earn during their training assignments. In addition, about half of SCSEP participants enter into unsubsidized employment after exiting the program. This high rate of success is despite the fact that SCSEP serves the most-in-need seniors, including those with low employment prospects (94% of all SCSEP participants), many of whom are homeless or at-risk of homelessness (63%), who have disabilities (26%), or who reside in rural areas (25%) or areas of persistent unemployment (19%). Additionally, 12% of SCSEP participants in 2019 were veterans.

SCSEP participants who exit for employment earn more in their first year than the annual SCSEP training costs, resulting in a strong return on the federal investment, according to a 2017 Urban Institute study.

The need for SCSEP remains critical, as it takes unemployed older adults much longer to return to the workforce than their younger counterparts, and even longer for most-in-need older adults with low employment prospects. A recent U.S. Senate Aging Committee report found that age discrimination, inadequate training opportunities, and other factors make it more difficult for

older workers to find jobs and thrive in the workplace. Coupled with a looming retirement savings crisis, where roughly one-third of workers do not have access to a retirement plan at work and the majority of older Americans do not have nearly enough savings, it is crucial that we continue to invest in this vital program.

Please help to ensure job training for older workers continues by robustly funding the Senior Community Service Employment Program in FY 2022.

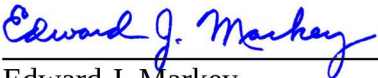
Sincerely,



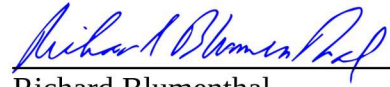
Christopher S. Murphy
United States Senator



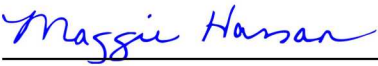
Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator



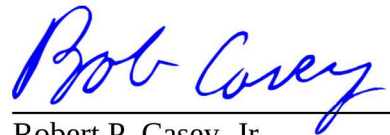
Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



Maggie Hassan
Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator



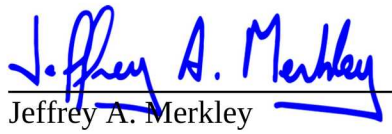
Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator



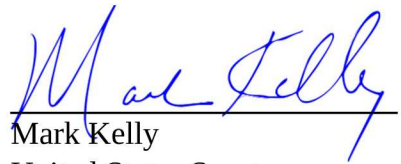
Robert Menendez
United States Senator



Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



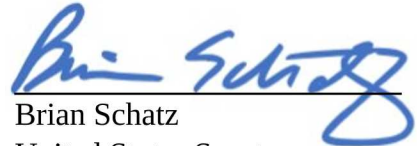
Jeffrey A. Merkley
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Mark Kelly
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Amy Klobuchar
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Brian Schatz
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Alex Padilla
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Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



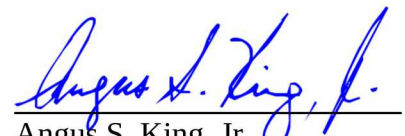
Kyrsten Sinema
United States Senator



Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator



Bernard Sanders
United States Senator