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**CAPE member
organizations:**

Agudath Israel
of America
American Montessori
Society
Association Montessori
International-USA
Association of Christian
Teachers and Schools
Association of Christian
Schools International
Association of Waldorf
Schools of N.A.
Christian Schools
International
Council on Educational
Standards and
Accountability
Evangelical Lutheran
Church in America
Friends Council
on Education
Lutheran Church-
Missouri Synod
National Association of
Episcopal Schools
National Association of
Independent Schools
National Catholic
Educational Association
National Christian
School Association
Oral Roberts University
Educational Fellowship
Seventh-day Adventist
Board of Education
United States Conference
of Catholic Bishops
Wisconsin Evangelical
Lutheran Synod Schools
34 Affiliated State
Organizations

September 15, 2014

The Honorable John Kline
Chairman
Committee on Education and the Workforce
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Kline:

We write in support of your amendment in the nature of a substitute to S. 1086, the *Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 2014*.

Earlier this year, the U. S. Senate reaffirmed the right of parents to choose the child care program that best meets their child's needs when it approved S. 1086, a bipartisan bill to reauthorize the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) program, which, since the 1990s, has helped low-income families pay for child care, whether in public, private, or religious settings. The bill included language affirming the use of child care certificates, which are provided directly to parents for use in whatever program best suits their child: faith-based, Montessori, Waldorf, or any other public or private program. Your substitute amendment retains that critical provision and even adds language in various sections that supports the availability of a variety of approaches to childhood development.

CAPE's issue paper on early childhood development states that legislation promoting early education "should support the right of parents to choose from a range of programs, including explicitly religious programs." The bill in question clearly meets that standard.

Recent efforts by the Administration for Children and Families have sought to increase the use of grants and contracts in the CCDBG program to the disfavor of certificates, which provide parents the greatest array of child care options. S. 1086 counters those efforts by stating that nothing in the statute "shall be construed in a manner (1) to favor or promote the use of grants and contracts for the receipt of child care services...over the use of child care certificates; or (2) to disfavor or discourage the use of such certificates for the purchase of child care services, including those services provided by private or nonprofit entities, such as faith-based providers."

By way of background, the Council for American Private Education (CAPE) is a coalition of 19 national organizations (listed left) and 34 state affiliates serving private elementary and secondary schools. There are 30,861 private schools in the United States; one in four of the nation's schools is a private school. About 5.3 million students (10 percent of all PK-12 students) attend them. CAPE member organizations represent about 80 percent of private school enrollment nationwide.

Thank you for continuing to protect the right of parents to choose from a variety of truly distinctive child care options.

Sincerely,



Joe McTighe
Executive Director