



February 2, 2021

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chair
Committee on Health, Education, Labor and
Pensions
United States Senate
154 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Burr
Ranking Member
Committee on Health, Education, Labor and
Pensions
United States Senate
217 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chair Murray and Senator Burr:

As Governors, we recognize that the issues confronting our education system are among the most challenging our nation has ever faced. States need a partner at the U.S. Department of Education that understands how schools operate, knows the flexibility required to respond to students' health and academic needs, and has experienced the sacrifices educators make daily.

Dr. Miguel Cardona has worked in a classroom, has led schools and districts, and has worked for a Governor. We believe he is uniquely qualified to partner with Governors to keep students and educators safe while pursuing the urgent need to swiftly and safely resume in-person instruction.

We urge the U.S. Senate to confirm Dr. Cardona quickly and with strong bipartisan support.

When COVID-19 struck, Dr. Cardona focused his energy on recognizing and addressing the pandemic's emotional toll on educators, students and their families. He prioritized reopening schools in Connecticut safely, while ensuring that those students and teachers who did not return to in-person instruction nevertheless had the tools they needed to continue teaching and learning. And he well understands the systemic obstacles that create inequities for students. He has redoubled his career-long efforts to tear down walls that separate those students from a high-quality education.

Dr. Cardona has navigated federal education programs at the state and local levels. He realizes that improving the quality of preschools, K-12 schools, and higher education comes through a strong state-federal partnership. He knows that quality is not achieved through bureaucratic mandates that stifle classroom innovation and creativity.

Parents of students that attended schools where Dr. Cardona was principal said that his leadership made the school "feel like family." For our nation to address learning loss, better serve students with disabilities, make college more affordable, and confront our national education shortcomings – we need a

U.S. Secretary of Education to unite parents, educators, Democrats, and Republicans to move our education system forward.

We know that Dr. Cardona can do that, and Governors look forward to working with him to equitably serve students from early childhood into their careers.

Sincerely,



Governor Ned Lamont
State of Connecticut



Governor Gavin Newsom
State of California



Governor Laura Kelly
State of Kansas



Governor Janet Mills
State of Maine



Governor Gretchen Whitmer
State of Michigan



Governor Steve Sisolak
State of Nevada



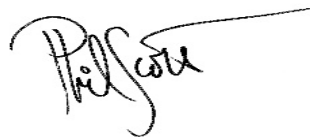
Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham
State of New Mexico



Governor Kate Brown
State of Oregon



Governor Tom Wolf
State of Pennsylvania



Governor Phil Scott
State of Vermont



Governor Ralph Northam
State of Virginia



Governor Jay Inslee
State of Washington