

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 13, 2009

The Honorable Daniel K. Inouye
Chairman
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Defense
119 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Defense
119 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Inouye and Senator Cochran:

More than a decade of peer reviewed, published research shows the Reach Out and Read (ROR) early literacy program to be a highly effective, physician-based, school readiness strategy. Results like these have prompted the American Academy of Pediatrics to endorse the program. More than 4,500 clinics and hospitals now implement the ROR program. ROR is near the completion of the first year of a pilot project to expand the program to military bases. They have successfully added 90,000 military children and their families to the program.

We believe that ROR presents a unique opportunity to support military families with young children. ROR helps parents understand their children's developmental stages. It also builds routines that help to comfort and reassure worried children, and brings moments of joy into their daily lives by strengthening knowledge and skills that are essential for families being tested by such stresses as separation and deployment.

Reach Out and Read trained physicians provide parents with advice on the importance of reading daily to their children -- and the tools to do so -- age and culturally appropriate books. At every well child visit (from age six months thru five years -- 10 visits) pediatricians and other medical personnel in the program make sure that parents understand that the early literacy skills are best instilled by parents and the biggest indicator of school success.

We urge you to include \$2 million in Operation and Maintenance, Defense-Wide to fund the continued implementation of these Reach Out and Read pilot projects, and an additional 20 military facilities, bringing the total number of military families served to more than 175,000.

Thank you for your consideration of this important request.

We certify that neither we nor our immediate families have a pecuniary interest in this congressionally directed spending item requested for Fiscal Year 2010, consistent with the requirements of paragraph 9 of Rule XLIV of the Standing Rules of the Senate. We further certify that a description of this request has been posted on our official websites, along with the accompanying justification.

Sincerely,

Paul Reul

Sayby Chaulkin

Whitcomb

Shirrod Brown

Mary Landrum

Debbie Stabenow

Blanche L. Lincoln

Chris Dodd

Roland W. Burris

John F. Kerry

Paul Bepler

Edward M Kennedy

Jefferson

Marie Curie

Tom Ullrich

Jon Lick
