

May 27, 2020

The Honorable Martin Heinrich
United States Senate
413 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Susan Collins
United States Senate
303 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Heinrich and Senator Collins,

We write in support of the Two-Generation Economic Empowerment Act of 2020, S.3338 and the Pathways to Health Careers Act, H.R.3398 and S.3376, legislation that advances a two-generation (2Gen) approach.

A 2Gen approach builds family well-being by intentionally and simultaneously working with children and parents. Anchored in equity and informed by parents' lived experience, 2Gen approaches are proven to result in stronger and better outcomes for the entire family. Momentum is building for the 2Gen approach as policymakers and practitioners at the city, county, and state level embrace it and fuel a groundswell of innovation and collaboration to advance family well-being.

The current COVID-19 pandemic has starkly revealed the systemic and structural inequities families with low incomes across our country face. We know that families are resilient when provided solid economic opportunities and a safe work environment. It is this resiliency of parents that will be the backbone of rebuilding efforts. The 2Gen approach boosts the power of education, early learning and care, health and employment systems that are key to ensuring equitable access to resources and opportunities for all families.

The Two-Generation Economic Empowerment Act of 2020 and the Pathways to Health Careers Act are measures that address the systemic issues preventing families from unlocking their potential. Both will support families as they weather the current economic health crisis, while promoting long-term family economic mobility. They also promote increased effectiveness and efficiency of public resources.

The [Two-Generation Economic Empowerment Act of 2020 \(S. 3338\)](#), sponsored by Senators Martin Heinrich (D-N.M.) and Susan Collins (R-ME), seeks to align and link existing systems and funding streams to increase economic security, early learning and care, educational success, social capital, and the health and well-being of the whole family. Introduced for a third consecutive Congress, the new bill is honed to address provisions previously enacted. By example, during the 115th Congress, a provision requesting the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to conduct a national study on 2Gen approaches, highlighting 2Gen efforts and outcomes in various states and localities, was enacted as part of the FY 2018 Omnibus (P.L. 115-141). The GAO released a [report](#) on its findings in May 2020. S.3338 builds on the strong evidence that supporting children and their parents together has an outsize impact for generations. A college degree has proven to double a parent's income, and a \$3,000 increase during early childhood yields a 17 percent increase in adult earnings.

The Two-Generation Economic Empowerment Act of 2020 will:

- Increase flexibility for states, local governments and tribes to develop programs that best meet their needs through Two-Generation Performance Partnerships that can test innovative ways to support families;
- Coordinate federal efforts to assist in the development and implementation of two-generation approaches; and
- Increase opportunities for families in need by funding projects that work.

The provisions within this legislation seek to advance a family-centered approach to practice, policy and funding, and could result in transformative change for families, especially those most impacted by the COVID-19 economic and public health emergency. By creating enabling conditions through systems change, parents and their children will have increased access to pathways and supports that promote family prosperity.

The [Pathways to Health Careers Act \(H.R. 3398 and S. 3376\)](#), introduced by Representative Danny K. Davis (D-IL) and Senator Martin Heinrich (D-N.M.), builds upon the success of the current Health Profession Opportunity Grant (HPOG) Program that facilitates a 2Gen approach by bundling education and job training with critical family supports like child care, transportation, and career coaching. Through the provision of comprehensive and streamlined services and supports, parents with low incomes can access the resources they need to successfully start a career in a well-paid and in-demand health profession. [Evaluations](#) for the current HPOG and the trainings' 2Gen approach show that the program has been particularly effective in achieving economic mobility outcomes for people who often experience multiple barriers to employment. Its emphasis and increased investments in rural America and in tribal communities ensures that all communities and parents with low incomes can benefit from this program. H.R.3398 passed the House of Representatives last fall and we support swift passage of the companion legislation in the Senate.

Communities and states continue to embrace a 2Gen approach, and we are encouraged by the ongoing bipartisan commitment at the federal level. We enthusiastically support the Two-Generation Economic Empowerment Act and the Pathways to Health Careers Act and acknowledge both as positive and concrete steps toward ensuring that family prosperity can pass from one generation to the next.

Sincerely,

Anne B. Mosle
Vice President, Aspen Institute
Executive Director, Ascend at the Aspen
Institute
Washington, DC

Marjorie R. Sims
Managing Director
Ascend at the Aspen Institute
Washington, DC

**American Public Human Services
Association (APHSA)**
Arlington, VA

**The Hope Center for College, Community and
Justice at Temple University**
Philadelphia, PA

National Association of Counties (NACo)
Washington, DC

**National Association of Workforce Boards
(NAWB)**
Washington, DC

