August 27, 2015

The Honorable Jerry Hill
California State Senate
State Capitol, Room 5035
Sacramento, California

Re: SB 799 (Hill) – Support

Dear Senator Hill:

On behalf of Children Now, The Education Trust West, Public Advocates, the League of Women Voters of California and the California State PTA, we are writing to inform you of our support for your SB 799.

SB 799 would fix the restrictions in Education Code Section 4127.01 imposed on school districts as part of the 2014-15 budget trailer bill, SB 858. With the passage of Proposition 2 by the voters, this code section requires school districts to spend their fiscal reserves (assigned and unassigned account balances) down to no more than two to three times the minimum recommended reserve for economic uncertainties in any fiscal year following a fiscal year in which the State makes a payment of any amount to the Public School System Stabilization Account.

We view this provision as inconsistent with the principle of local control over resource allocation. Further, we believe it would have a disproportional impact on schools serving low income students, English learners and foster youth, the very students that LCFF was intended to provide additional support. LCFF is giving local communities an opportunity to engage in healthy conversations about what makes a good budget, including what a prudent fiscal reserve should be. Taking away that decision from local communities is a step in the wrong direction, and it flies in the face of recent experience in the Great Recession and our highest need students being impacted the most.

SB 799 would provide a reasonable fix to the overly burdensome restrictions on districts’ authority to maintain a prudent fiscal reserve. We are pleased to support your bill.

Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

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