



House Committee On Education
HB 2801

February 17, 2015

Chair Doherty and Members of the Committee:

Susan N. Dreyfus
President and CEO

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I write to express my deep appreciation and support for the passage of HB 2801, relating to early reading programs. The Alliance for Strong Families and Communities is a national organization dedicated to achieving a vision of a healthy society and strong communities for all children, adults, and families. Representing a network of nearly 500 organizations across the United States and Canada, the Alliance works for transformational change by supporting nonprofit human-serving organizations across North America as they translate knowledge into best practices that improve their communities. Alliance members represent a significant force in the nonprofit human service sector. Collectively, they:

- Serve more than 4.6 million clients annually
- Operate with a combined \$6.3 billion budget
- Employ approximately 138,300 full-time employees
- Operate in 2,200 locations
- Are governed by more than 8,600 board members
- Benefit from the goodwill of roughly 200,000 volunteers
- Receive generous support from approximately 296,000 individual donors

As a national organization dedicated to achieving a vision of a healthy society and strong communities for all children, adults, and families, the Alliance for Strong Families and Communities understands firsthand the critical importance of programs like those supported by your efforts.

However, special applause is due for the legislation's proposed use of volunteer mentors ages 50 or older to deliver these reading assistance services.

The 2008 MetLife Foundation/Civic Ventures Encore Career Survey shows that the generation forged in the social activism of the 1960s shares a desire to remain engaged in civic life into their 50s, 60s and beyond. Almost half (44.7%) of respondents age 44 to 70 expressed interest in social purpose encore careers. And they are in addition to the millions who are already in encore careers. More than half (52%) of those interested in encore careers are "extremely interested" or "very interested" in working for nonprofit organizations. Almost one third (32%) of those surveyed expressed an interest in working with children and youth.

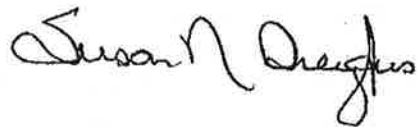
By leveraging the swelling desire among baby boomers – increasingly reaching retirement age, you tap into their passion and expertise and a growing social movement toward intergenerational programs, and do so much more than provide transactional services. Intergenerational collaboration unites and improves our communities, and public policies that can meet the needs of multiple generations

make wiser use of scarce resources. Intergenerational approaches have been demonstrated to have a positive relationship to economic growth and value creation.

This legislation would impact, therefore, more than the children directly targeted by this program. You will reach and support older Americans looking to be a part of a meaningful effort in their retirement, and build new supportive adult relationships for the children being served.

The Alliance for Strong Families and Communities wholeheartedly endorses your legislation. Please do not hesitate to contact us if we can do anything to assist in its passage.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Susan N. Dreyfus". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Susan N. Dreyfus
President and CEO