

## Urgent Opportunity for Pediatric Subspecialty Advocacy

Earlier this year, pediatric subspecialists mobilized and successfully encouraged **38 U.S. representatives** to sign a letter supporting \$50 million in funding for the Pediatric Subspecialty Loan Repayment Program (PSLRP). **Now we need your advocacy to support a similar effort in the U.S. Senate.**

Our efforts began to pay off last year when PSLRP was authorized by Congress for five years. Once funded, this program will offer up to \$35,000 in loan repayment for up to three years for pediatric subspecialists who treat children in underserved areas.

But the program cannot start until Congress provides funding for it in its annual spending bill. That's where we need your help.

Two senators – Sen. Jack Reed (D-R.I.) and Sen. Bill Cassidy (R-La.) – are circulating a **bipartisan letter** and asking all their colleagues in the Senate to join them in signing it. This letter will be sent to appropriators, the senators who write the spending bills. The letter asks for up to \$50 million in funding for the Pediatric Subspecialty Loan Repayment Program. Our goal is to get as many senators to sign this letter as possible to show Senate appropriators the breadth of support for the program.

**Please email or call your U.S. senators as soon as possible and ask them to sign the Reed/Cassidy letter of support for up to \$50 million in funding for the Pediatric Subspecialty Loan Repayment Program.** A template email and phone script specifically for contacting your U.S. senators is available below.

### Contact Your Senators Today

Reach out to your U.S. senators today and urge them to sign the Reed/Cassidy letter of support for \$50 million in funding for the Pediatric Subspecialty Loan Repayment Program. You can reach out to them by phone or email. If you have time, you can call and then follow-up via email to maximize your impact. You can also call your senators' offices again in a week to remind them to join the letter if they haven't already.

**By Phone:** You can call the U.S. Capitol switchboard at (202) 224-3121 to be connected to your senator's office. You also can find your U.S. senators by going to [Senate.gov](https://www.senate.gov) and using the "Find Your Senators" feature at the top left of the page. The contact information for each senator's Washington, DC, office is available on their website.

#### Talking points

- Hello. My name is **{First and last name}** from **{Town}**. I am an academic pediatrician specializing in **{insert your area of research expertise e.g., pediatric endocrinology, etc.}**, and I am calling today to urge **{Senator's name}** to sign Senator Reed and Senator Cassidy's letter supporting up to \$50 million in funding for the Pediatric Subspecialty Loan Repayment Program.
- Across the country, there are significant shortages of pediatric subspecialists and child and adolescent psychiatrists. These are physicians with special training for taking care of children with special health care or mental health needs.
- These shortages lead to long travel distances for parents seeking care for their children and long appointment wait times.

- The Pediatric Subspecialty Loan Repayment Program will help increase access to pediatric subspecialists who provide care in underserved and rural areas.
- I hope **{Senator's name}** will consider supporting up to \$50 million in funding for the program and sign Senators Reed and Cassidy's letter.
- Thank you for all you do for children.

**By Email:** You can email your senators through their websites. You can find your U.S. senators by going to [Senate.gov](https://www.senate.gov) and using the "Find Your Senators" feature at the top left of the page. Email your senators through the contact form on their website using the template text below.

You can customize this email by adding an additional paragraph with specific information about yourself and your state, such as this:

I am a pediatric **{insert your subspecialty, e.g., endocrinologist, etc.}**, which means I care for children **{example of children you care for, e.g. with diabetes}**.

**Email text:**

*Subject:* Strengthen Child Health and Mental Health in Rural and Underserved Areas

As a constituent I am urging you to sign Senator Reed and Senator Cassidy's letter supporting up to \$50 million in funding for the Pediatric Subspecialty Loan Repayment Program in Fiscal Year 2022. This program will help provide children with timely access to health services.

Millions of children reside 1.5 hours or more from needed specialty care. Across the country, there are significant shortages of pediatric subspecialists and child and adolescent psychiatrists, which lead to long travel distances and long appointment wait times.

There is also a disparity in the geographic distribution of pediatric subspecialists, resulting in many children in underserved rural and urban areas not receiving timely health care. Children with complex medical conditions are among the most vulnerable; their ability to see the right doctor in a reasonable amount of time should not be determined by where they live.

The Pediatric Subspecialty Loan Repayment Program will help increase access to pediatric subspecialists who provide care in underserved and rural areas. Once funded, this program will provide \$35,000 in loan repayment per year for up to three years in exchange for providing care for an underserved area, helping to address the economic factors that discourage individuals from subspecializing.

Please consider supporting up to \$50 million in funding for this program and sign the letter being circulated by Senators Reed and Cassidy. Contact Jill Boland in Sen. Reed's office or Mary Moody in Sen. Cassidy's office for more information.

Thank you for all you do.