

March 31, 2009

The Honorable Tom Harkin
Chairman, Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies
Senate Committee on Appropriations
131 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Arlen Specter
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies
Senate Committee on Appropriations
131 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Re: *Head Start Funding for FY 2010*

Dear Chairman Harkin and Ranking Member Specter:

Thank you for your strong and continued support of Head Start and Early Head Start (collectively "Head Start"), the nation's premiere early childhood education and care programs providing comprehensive school readiness, education, health, nutrition, and parent involvement services to low-income children ages birth to five and their families.

To make a down payment on the President's "Zero to Five" Plan and build on the recent investments in early childhood education and care in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, we hope that you will consider providing \$8,112,786,000 for activities under the Head Start Act for FY 2010 Appropriations. This amount will foster sustainable growth in Head Start, Early Head Start, Migrant and Seasonal Head Start, and American Indian/Alaska Native Head Start programs across the country and allow Head Start programs' base funding to keep up with the pace of inflation since 2002.

Studies have demonstrated that funding spent on the Head Start program earns a high return on the investment for society. Its benefits include increased educational achievement, improved health outcomes, higher expected future earnings, better employment opportunities, and increased family stability. Children enrolled in Head Start have a lower risk of welfare dependency, criminal behavior, grade repetition, and special education than their counterparts without the benefit of Head Start.

We are proud to represent Head Start programs across the country and look forward to continued efforts to ensure that more children and families who need Head Start services can receive them. Thank you for your consideration of this request and for all that you do for Head Start children and families.

Sincerely,

National Head Start Association
National Indian Head Start Directors Association
National Migrant and Seasonal Head Start Association
Arkansas Head Start Association
Colorado Head Start Association
Head Start Association of Hawaii
Idaho Head Start Association
Illinois Head Start Association
Iowa Head Start Association
Indiana Head Start Association
Kansas Head Start Association
Kentucky Head Start Association
Maryland Head Start Association
Massachusetts Head Start Association
Michigan Head Start Association
Mississippi Head Start Association
Montana Head Start Association
New Mexico Head Start Association
North Carolina Head Start Association
North Dakota Head Start Association
Ohio Head Start Association
Oregon Head Start Association
Pennsylvania Head Start Association
Puerto Rico Head Start Directors Association
South Dakota Head Start Association
Tennessee Head Start Association
Washington State Association of Head Start & ECEAP
Wisconsin Head Start Association
Head Start Alliance
Region IX Head Start Association