

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

April 9, 2003

The Honorable Ralph Regula
Chairman
House Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and
Human Services and Education
2358 Rayburn HOB
Washington, D.C. 20515-6024

The Honorable David Obey
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and
Human Services and Education
1016 Longworth HOB
Washington, D.C. 20515-6024

Dear Chairman Regula and Ranking Member Obey:

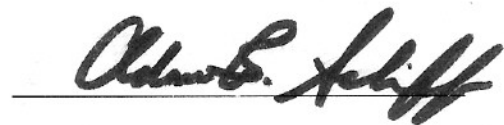
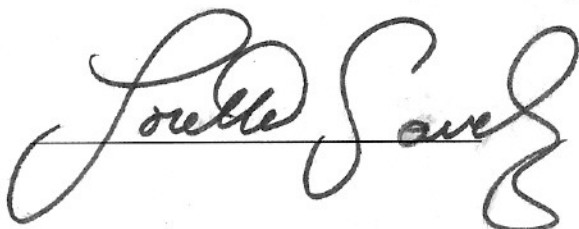
We are writing to express our strong support for the highest possible funding for Head Start as you develop the Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations bill. Head Start programs currently assist over 900,000 children and their families nationwide. We are especially concerned that the level of funding in the President's FY '04 budget proposal cuts funding for training and technical assistance for Head Start and hinders the ability of programs to expand services to additional children and families.

Head Start programs provide comprehensive education to children and their families to combat poverty and improve the richness of the early learning experience. Head Start is currently funded at \$6.67 billion, which leaves behind over 40 percent of the eligible children across the nation. The President's budget currently funds Head Start programs at \$6.82 billion for FY '04. This proposal includes a 52 percent reduction from FY '03 funding levels for training and technical assistance programs. It is estimated that an additional 87,000 children would be able to participate in Head Start and Early Head Start programs if funding was increased by \$1 billion for FY '04.

Head Start programs have consistently received praise from parents throughout the country. A customer satisfaction index released by the President's Management Council in 1999 showed that Head Start had the highest rating of any government agency. The survey further found that on a scale of 1-100 for parent trust of the program, Head Start rated 94. Moreover, studies have shown that the economic benefits of Head Start far exceed their costs, with one program showing that for every \$1 spent by taxpayers, they received \$7 in future benefits.

Last year, we made a promise to the nation that we would leave no child behind. Unless funding is increased for Head Start, we will continue to leave thousands of children behind and deny them the health, social, and educational services that comprise this highly successful program. Head Start is an investment in our future that merits the additional funding we are requesting.

Sincerely,



Todd R. Platts

Barbara Jee

Michael M. Hord

Elizabeth Turnings

Jim Cooper

Paul Ell

~~Janet Williams Jones~~

Ed Pannoy

Stephanie Potts Jones

Jim McAnutt

Susan A. Davis

Jim Marshall

Marjorie Waters

Hilda L. Solis

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Ciro D. Rodriguez

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Corine Brown

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