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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY
SUBCOMMITTEES:
CHAIRWOMAN, BORDER, MARITIME AND
GLOBAL COUNTERTERRORISM
EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS, PREPAREDNESS
AND RESPONSE

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
SUBCOMMITTEES:
OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS
MILITARY PERSONNEL
READINESS

March 20, 2009

The Honorable John Spratt
Chairman
House Committee on the Budget
207 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-6065

The Honorable Paul Ryan
Ranking Member
House Committee on the Budget
B-71 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-6065

Dear Chairman Spratt and Ranking Member Ryan:

As you prepare the Fiscal Year 2010 House Budget Resolution, please consider the Head Start program a top priority and include no less than \$7.8 billion for this critical program.

We understand the serious constraints on the federal budget, however funding for a high performing federal program like Head Start is a critical investment in our children's future and the future of our country. Between FY2002 and FY2008, Head Start was subject to an 11% real cut in funding, so we were pleased that the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 included \$2.1 billion for Head Start. That funding will help Head Start programs recover from the previous six years of funding cuts. However, in order to ensure Head Start's continued success, we must commit to providing adequate funding for Head Start through the annual budget and appropriations process.

The purpose of Head Start is to improve the school readiness of low-income children by enhancing their cognitive, social, and emotional development in a learning environment that supports children's growth in language, literacy, mathematics, science, social and emotional functioning, creative arts, and physical skills. Year after year, Head Start programs around this nation have served this purpose and transformed the lives of children and their families in dramatic ways.

Enrollment in Head Start can break the cycle of poverty that affects too many American families. Children who are in the program are better prepared to learn and have higher self-esteem and more advanced social behavior when they enter school. They also score higher on school readiness measures such as verbal achievement, perceptual reasoning, and social competence than children who did not attend preschool. The most efficient way to reduce the achievement gap between certain affluent and disadvantaged students in the 12th grade is to reduce the achievement gaps that exist in the 1st grade.

Head Start also creates an economic benefit for the country; for every one dollar spent on Head Start, the country realizes almost nine dollars in benefits through participants' increased earnings, decreased welfare dependence, and other factors.

Head Start is an investment in our future that merits adequate funding so the program can continue to provide much needed education and health services to America's most vulnerable children. Please include no less than \$7.8 billion for Head Start in the Fiscal Year 2010 House Budget. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,


Loretta Sanchez


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