



Murray Comes Through for Kids; Senate Labor HHS Committee Provides \$989 million for Head Start

Bellevue, Washington. July 28, 2010.

Yesterday the Senate Labor HHS appropriations subcommittee, of which Senator Patty Murray (D-WA) is a member, voted to support major investments in early learning including a \$989 million increase for Head Start. The full committee will mark up the bill on Thursday. The funding will be used to maintain the increases in the number of children served as a result of the Recovery Act. Nationwide more than 60,000 Head Start children are being served with recovery act funds, and 1,034 of those children live in Washington State. This expansion of much-needed services to low-income families resulted in 162 jobs being created statewide.

The majority of the funding will go to support Early Head Start. Early Head Start is a comprehensive early education program for pregnant moms, infants, and toddlers. The program began in 1994 as a complement to Head Start which serves mostly three and four year olds. The program has gained significant recognition and support in recent years because of its strong research results and the growing body of evidence that learning begins at birth. Out of the more than 1,034 kids being served by recovery funds in Washington, 832 of those slots are in Early Head Start. Despite the increase in funding Head Start has only been able to serve about 4 out of 10 eligible children, while Early Head Start has been able to serve less than 4 out of every 100 eligible families.

The Senate Labor HHS bill also included a \$1 billion increase in child care assistance to support low income families and \$300 million to start a new early childhood fund that states can use to improve early education standards and practices, build an effective early childhood workforce, and improve the school readiness of young children.

Joel Ryan: Executive Director of Washington State Association of Head Start and ECEAP

"Senator Murray continues to demonstrate that she is a true champion for kids. With her help more than 1,000 Head Start children being served by recovery act dollars in our state will not lose access to high quality early childhood education and services. I appreciate her leadership and her understanding of the on ground needs of the residents of our state. From my perspective we do not have a stronger advocate for kids than Senator Murray."

Sandy Junker, the director of Lower Columbia College HS/ECEAP in Longview, WA, was able to create 13 new jobs with the stimulus money. These jobs were a great addition to the staff that was already working so hard to make the lives better for the kids who need them. Lower Columbia received ARRA (American Recovery and Reinvestment Act) money to serve Early Head Start kids— 60 slots for pregnant women and children birth to 3 years.

"The populations we are serving within our Early Head Start program are families with significant poverty, those suffering from domestic violence, substance abuse, part of the CPS system, foster care children and teen mothers. We currently have a waitlist of over

70 children and families wanting to get into our program. The need for Early Head Start Services in Cowlitz County is significant. There is no other program here that provides the comprehensive services that this program does for the children and families within the County. Early brain research tells us that brain development begins in the womb. It is critical to maintain funding for Early Head Start if we want to make a significant difference in the lives of these children."

Cheryl DiNovi: Director of Birth-Three at the Denise Louie Education Center in Seattle

With the recovery act funding the program provides comprehensive services to 8 pregnant women, 29 infants, 45 toddlers and 15 teen parents. The program serves Spanish, Somali, Chinese, Vietnamese, Karin and English speaking populations in SeaTac and Seattle. Most of the families are immigrants and refugees without resources or supports. Recovery funds allowed Denise Louie to hire 7 home visitors, 2 home visitor supervisors, a nutritionist/special needs coordinator, a health coordinator, a program specialist and a director position for a total of 14 new jobs.

"We have a partnership with an alternative high school that has a teen parent program. Teens that participate in our program will be receiving high school credit. Being able to provide parent training, health, dental, nutritional, social/emotional and educational services in the home with this most vulnerable and high-risk population is where change really occurs."

Andy Januszkiewicz, of Kittitas County Head Start/ECEAP

"The ARRA funding through the Early Head Start grant has allowed us to serve 54 infants and toddlers in Kittitas County. Previously there were limited resources in the county for Infants/Toddlers. We are incredibly grateful for the support we have received from the recovery funding and thankful to Senator Murray for standing up for low income kids and families."

About Head Start

In Washington State Head Start serves more than 16,000 pregnant women, infants, toddlers, and preschoolers. Founded in 1965 the program provides a wide array of educational, social, health, nutrition, and parent engagement services to the most at risk children and their families. A recent study in Montgomery County, Maryland found that kindergarteners with special needs that received Head Start services needed 3.7 hours of special education per week on average compared to 9.8 hours for non-Head Start children. This is a huge financial savings. Additional research has found that children that have been through the program are less likely to need special education services, repeat a grade, get into trouble with the law, and end up on welfare. Strong research also exists for Early Head Start as well including the latest results from the impact study. Head Start gets kids ready for kindergarten and provides them opportunities to achieve their fullest potentials.

About WSA

The Washington State Association of Head Start/ECEAP is a statewide organization composed of representatives from ECEAP, Head Start, Early Head Start, Migrant/Seasonal Head Start, and Native American Head Start. The association has been in existence since the late 1960's, and was incorporated as a non-profit organization in 1986. The organization advocates for Head Start and for ECEAP in Olympia and in Washington DC. You can visit our web site at www.wsaheadstarteceap.com.

CONTACT: If you would like speak with or visit a local Head Start program that received recovery act funds so you can see how these funds are being put to use please call Joel Ryan or Katy Warren, 425.453.1227, cell phone 253.486.9077, or via e-mail at joel@wsaheadstarteceap.com. We would happy to arrange that for you.